Ernst Gombrich and the Memory of Aby Warburg: Emotion, Identity and Scholarship

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Submitted for the degree of PhD
February, 2007

The work presented in this thesis is my own.

Matthew Finch

Abstract

This thesis in intellectual history examines the work of art historian Ernst Gombrich (1909-2001), one-time Director of London's Warburg Institute, on that institute's founder, Aby Warburg (1866-1929). The memory of Warburg, as evoked in Gombrich's scholarship, is investigated as a focal point for contemporary concerns on the part of Gombrich and his peers, and as an influence on Warburg's reception in 20th century scholarship.

The thesis gives a close account of Gombrich's particular intellectual achievements, in order better to understand his status as a figure of great popular and academic significance in mid-to-late 20th century art history and art theory. Gombrich was an émigré who left his native Austria for the United Kingdom in the 1930s and this thesis also considers the impact on intellectual history of the mid-20th century emigration from Central Europe, which was driven by ethnonationalist and above all Nazi persecution. Specifically, the thesis examines the significance for Gombrich's work of his Austrian background, in terms of both the German-language humanist culture of *Bildung* and Gombrich's sense, as a person of Jewish background, of Jewish identity.

Using a methodology informed by the anthropology of emotions and the discipline of memory studies, Warburg is approached specifically as a *lieu de mémoire* on Pierre Nora's model. The argument is that Gombrich invested his own concerns in his scholarly representations of the older art historian. The means by which this investment was made, and the negotiation of this investment amongst Gombrich's colleagues at the Warburg Institute, are traced through archival research. The impact of Gombrich's investment in Warburg on the older art historian's subsequent, posthumous reception in academia is examined, and the potential for alternative visions of Warburg marginalised by Gombrich's representation is also considered.

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List of Abbreviations

AAC Academic Assistance Council
AWI 'Aby Warburg's Ideas. Draft Material for Warburg Biography (1947, 1948)'
BBC British Broadcasting Corporation
EHG Uncatalogued Private Papers of Ernst Gombrich
EKP Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Ernst Kris Papers
GC General Correspondence
IWM Imperial War Museum Oral History Archive
KBW *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg*
KHM *Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien*
LBA *Ludwig-Binswanger-Archiv*
LOC Library of Congress
SPSL Society for the Protection of Science and Learning
UT *Universitätsarchiv Tübingen*
WIA Warburg Institute Archive

Note on translation

Quotations appearing in German are offered in translation in the appendix to this thesis.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the many people who helped me in my research of primary (and obscure secondary) sources in this thesis, including Andrea Rauter of the Austrian Cultural Forum in London, Emil Brix, Michael Wischnath and his staff at the University of Tübingen, James Sutton at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Colin Harris of the Bodleian Library, Leonard Olschner and Steven Beller. Steffen Krüger was my mild-mannered transatlantic research assistant and provided great help with translations. John Prag and Leonie Gombrich generously consented for me to research the archives of their relatives Aby Warburg and Ernst Gombrich respectively; Leonie also kindly provided coffee and cake, and even survived my homemade Bakewell tart. Last but in no way least, at the Warburg Institute Archive, Claudia Wedepohl and Dorothea McEwan tirelessly provided vital assistance above and beyond the call of duty, and cannot be thanked enough.

At Queen Mary, practical and moral support came from Pat Hamilton, Rachael Gilmour, David Colclough and Ros King. Warren Boutcher was an exemplary supervisor. A discussion of my project with Bill Schwarz was hugely important to me in the final stages of my research; Bill, along with Lisa Jardine and Steffen Krüger (again!), also kindly read drafts of the thesis. Robert Pynsent and Tim Beasley-Murray at London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies must be also thanked for their generosity in supporting and encouraging the research that led to my choice of topic. Ger Duijzings' anthropology seminars at the same institution were hugely influential on my methodology in this thesis. Hanna Kwiatkowska of *East European Jewish Affairs* kindly gave me an excuse, in the form of a book review, to investigate the life and work of Max Liebermann.

I should also like to thank all the other people who provided friendship and support over the course of my research and writing: Fran and Jimmy; Maureen; Anne, Lucille and all at VRH; Anne, Fiona, and the Herne Bay crew; Pat, Cath and the Joy Lane crew; Oli; Dad; GD and his PMD minions (business is business); Cowboy Krüger (third time's the charm); Anne Geber; Sol; Ed and Lisa; **MOJO JOJO**; Filming Genius; Toni and Gareth; the incomparable Uzair; Olivia, Emily, Hannah, Elliot, Adam, Jack and Steven; Marley; Wendy, Tony, Michael, Indu and Sasha; most importantly, my late grandfather Willi, and Veronica, my **MUM**!

1.0 Introduction:

Ernst Gombrich and the memory of Aby Warburg

Ernst Gombrich (1909-2001) and Aby Warburg (1866-1929) are two art historians linked by a chain of tradition and memory. Scion of the famous German banking family, Warburg founded Hamburg's *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg* (Warburg Library of Cultural Studies) in the early twentieth century, but did not live to see it move to London in 1933. Gombrich joined the renamed Warburg Institute in 1936 as a young Viennese émigré and rose through its ranks until becoming its Director in 1959, going on to lead a career as one of the most well-known and well-honoured art historians in the world.

Gombrich became the custodian of Warburg's memory to the wider world, both in terms of his institutional role running the Warburg Institute and his authorship of *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*. This major study of his predecessor served to nourish discussion of Warburg's intellectual legacy in the latter part of the twentieth century, but was also the pre-eminent contemporary representation of Warburg as an individual. Warburg also represented a link to a Central European high culture largely lost during the Second World War. For Gombrich and his émigré peers, the preservation of the memory of Warburg was an important activity in maintaining the legacies of both the Hamburg art historian and the Central European culture of which he was a part.

However, this memory, lying across the boundary between the personal and the strictly scholarly, was also a focal point for emotional concerns and anxieties

originating during emigration and beyond. For those carrying on in Warburg's intellectual footsteps at the Institute in London, the founder's memory had to be preserved but also adapted to meet the demands of a new host culture and to reflect the experiences of the emigration and Second World War.

This thesis seeks, through close reading, archival research, and an anthropologically informed approach to memory studies, to chart and account for the investments in, and transformations of, the figure and scholarship of Aby Warburg by Warburg's most renowned biographer and intellectual heir, while also looking at the consequences of that investment and those transformations for wider intellectual culture.

1.1 'The emigration' – scholarly flight from Austria to the United Kingdom

In the years leading up to the Second World War, the rise of ethnonationalist movements in Central Europe - above all Nazism - caused a major displacement of people seeking to avoid persecution and discrimination. This displacement ranged along a spectrum from prudent voluntary emigration to exile under compulsion, or flight as refugees.

Scholars caught up in this mass movement of peoples have received particular attention in the relevant literature, ever since the immediate postwar period.[1] The effect of emigration on the intellectual life of home and host countries, as well as on the displaced community in its own right, makes it a highly significant historical event from a variety of perspectives.

With regard to the rise of Nazism and consequent emigration, Austria presents a special case. Although it is tempting for the historian to look on Austrian and German emigrations as a single phenomenon, Austria's late incorporation into the Nazi 'Greater Germany' – some five years after Hitler came to power in Berlin – and the complex and independent histories of anti-Semitism and ethnonationalism within Austria mean that it cannot wholly be ignored as an independent entity in studies of the emigration. Friedrich Stadler and Peter Weibel's volume *The Cultural Exodus from Austria: Vertreibung der Vernunft* indicates the extent to which a 'creeping emigration' had already been provoked before the Nazi annexation by the rise of an oppressive and anti-Semitic culture, and the establishment of a corporatist or 'Austrofascist' *Standestaat* under Engelbert Dollfuss and then Kurt Schuschnigg.[2]

Not all scholars inimical to these new Central European regimes were driven abroad in the first instance: 'internal exile' was a possibility for some. Johannes Feichtinger's major study of the Austrian case, *Wissenschaft zwischen den Kulturen,*

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[1] Among the first titles to be published on the scholarly flight to the USA were Stephen Duggan and Betty Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning: The Story of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars* (New York: MacMillan, 1948) and Norman Bentwich, *The Rescue and Achievement of Refugee Scholars: The Story of Displaced Scholars and Scientists 1933-1952* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1953); William Beveridge, a key figure in Britain's response to the displacement of Central European scholars, gave his own account in William Beveridge, *A Defence of Free Learning* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

[2] See Friedrich Stadler, 'The Emigration and Exile of Austrian Intellectuals', in *The Cultural Exodus from Austria. Vertreibung der Vernunft*, ed. by Friedrich Stadler and Peter Weibel, 2nd edn (Vienna and New York: Springer, 1995), pp. 14-26 and Günter Fellner, 'The Emigration of Austrian Historians' in *The Cultural Exodus from Austria*, pp. 174-186.

indicates that substantial extra-university networks had been developed for disapproved-of scholars in the interwar years.[3] It is significant that Feichtinger's study lays as much emphasis on the years 1933-1938 as those after *Anschluss*, or annexation by Germany, in his study of Austrian university teachers in emigration.[4] Even after 1938, there are examples of Austrian academics, dismissed from their posts after clashes with the Nazi regime, who continued to teach and research within a small and private circle.[5] However, after the Nazi seizure of power, the situation for most scholars rapidly declined. Racial legislation rendered formal and absolute the categories of discrimination and persection, so that there was no escape from anti-Semitism through assimilation or religious conversion.[6] Legislation even left its impact on international support for refugee academics, as aid organisations struggled to negotiate the imposition of 'Aryan' and 'non-Aryan' identities on the persecuted.[7] Waves of arrests were carried out against academics. Scholars were left in a rapidly declining situation, including the threat of concentration camps, which rendered emigration the only serious option for Austrian scholars of whom the new regime disapproved.

Scholars emigrated from Austria to a variety of destinations: these ranged from Shanghai and Palestine, where no immigration quotas were fixed, to Turkey, where the government's modernising policies required an influx of foreign educators; above all, though, they departed for the English-speaking lands, which Feichtinger designates as the most important destination states for émigré academics.[8] Feichtinger indicates that

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[3] See Johannes Feichtinger, *Wissenschaft zwischen den Kulturen: Österreichische Hochschullehrer in der Emigration 1933-1945* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 2001), pp. 32-38.
[4] See ibid., pp. 55-164.
[5] See the case of Arthur von Rosthorn, discussed in Günter Fellner, "The Emigration of Austrian Historians", in *The Cultural Exodus from Austria*, pp.174-186 (p. 180).
[6] Feichtinger, p. 136.
[7] Ibid., p. 136.
[8] Ibid., p. 40. On Shanghai, Palestine, Turkey, and other destinations, see Friedrich Stadler, "The Emigration and Exile of Austrian Intellectuals", in *The Cultural Exodus from Austria*, pp.14-26.

many of those displaced to the UK became significant intellectual figures.[9] Among the best-known scholars who came to the United Kingdom were Gombrich's friends Friedrich von Hayek (1899-1992) and Karl Popper (1902-1994) (in Popper's case after a wartime spent in New Zealand), Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), as well as Gombrich himself and other staff of the Warburg Institute that employed him.

Feichtinger attributes the attraction of the Anglophone world to the range of aid organisations for refugee scholars which existed there.[10] In Britain, despite a government policy which subordinated humanitarianism to national self-interest and was loath to accept immigrants without clear means of support, voluntary organisations assisting scholarly émigrés were being developed from as early as 1933 – the most notable being the Academic Assistance Council (AAC) founded by William Beveridge (1879-1963), later known as the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL).[11] This organisation helped place and even fund scholars in temporary or sometimes permanent posts within the British education system or abroad, especially in the United States.

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[9] Feichtinger, p. 18.

[10] The various international aid organisations working for the benefit of émigré scholars are discussed at length in ibid., pp. 55-137.

[11] On British policy towards 'the emigration', see Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

1.1.1 Understanding the émigré scholars as an 'intellectual immigration': Perry Anderson's 'Components of the National Culture'

The integration of foreign scholars, and foreign intellectual approaches, into existing national academic communities, might be expected to have a significant impact on the intellectual life of the host country, and a vast literature exists to chronicle this aspect of the German-speaking scholarly migration to Britain.[12]

One particular essay, among the earliest to address the issue of the scholarly migration to Britain, distinguishes itself for its broad and polemical tone and its stark ideological analysis.

Perry Anderson's 'Components of the National Culture', first published in 1968, initially examines the barriers that conservatism in British higher education had historically placed in the way of the radical student left.[13] According to Anderson's

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[12] See Beveridge; Feichtinger; *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, ed. by Werner E. Mosse and others (Tübingen: JCB Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991); *Keine Klage über England? Deutsche und Österreichische Exilerfahrungen in Grossbritannien 1933-1945*, ed. by Charmian Brinson and others (Munich: Iudicium, 1998); Michael Podro, "Art History and the Émigré Scholars", in *Die europaïsche Herausforderung, England und Deutschland in Europa*, ed. by Adolf M. Birke and Kurt Kluxen with Manfred Hansich (Munich: Saur, 1987), pp.81-91; *German-Speaking Exiles in Great Britain*, ed. by Ian Wallace (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999); *Between Two Languages: German-Speaking Exiles in Great Britain 1933-45*, ed. by William Abbey and others (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz and Akademischer Verlag Stuttgart, 1995); Peter Alter, *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain* (London: IB Tauris, 1998); *Exile in Great Britain: Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, ed. by Gerhard Hirschfeld (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1984); *Handbuch der Deutschsprachigen Emigration 1933-1945*, ed. by Claus-Dieter Krohn and Elizabeth Kohlhaas (Darmstadt: Primus, 1998); *Changing Countries: The Experience and Achievement of German-Speaking Exiles from Hitler in Britain, From 1933 to Today*, ed. by Marian Malet and Anthony Grenville (London: Libris, 2002); J.M. Ritchie, *German Exiles: British Perspectives* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997); *German-Speaking Exiles in Great Britain*, ed. by J.M. Ritchie (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2001); A. J Sherman, *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933–9*, 2nd edn (Ilford: Frank Cass, 1994); Daniel Snowman, *The Hitler Émigrés: The Cultural Impact on Britain of Refugees from Nazism* (London: Pimlico, 2003); Ronald Stent, *A Bespattered Page? The Internment of His Majesty's 'Most Loyal Enemy Aliens'* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1980).

[13] Perry Anderson, 'Components of the National Culture' originally appeared in *New Left Review*, 50 (1968), 3-57. It was republished in Anderson's *English Questions* (London and New York: Verso, 1992), pp. 48-104, 'shorn of some of the bombast and excess of the period to render [it] more readable, if not defensible.' (Anderson, *English Questions*, Acknowledgements Page). Comparison of the two versions indicates no real changes to content. There are stylistic revisions – e.g. 'The arguments of this survey can

analysis, Britain in 1968 lacked a significant student movement because its intellectual heritage offered no analysis of national culture from which to work out a programme of change. He writes:

> To unblock traditional attitudes towards university and society, a critique of established British culture is needed – not as a substitute for practical struggles in institutions of higher education and the society of which they are a part, but as their accompaniment.[14]

To this end, Anderson makes a critique of the disciplines which are most pertinent to the 'supp[ly of] our basic concepts of humanity in society [...which] form, by definition, essential premises of public action [...:] history, sociology, anthropology, economics, political theory, philosophy, aesthetics, literary criticism, psychology and psychoanalysis'.[15]

In each of these fields, Anderson finds a 'White emigration' in the mid-twentieth century – that is to say, a flight of intellectuals, mostly Central European and conservative, to Britain, motivated by the perceived 'proneness of most of continental Europe in this period to unpredictable, violent, fundamental change'.[16]

In Anderson's estimation, the intellectual émigrés' 'quality and originality vary greatly, but their collective role is indisputable'.[17] Rejecting the 'general ideas' which had occasioned upheaval in Central Europe, intellectual immigration revitalized the

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now be briefly resumed' for 'The results of this survey may now be briefly summated' – and a moderation of revolutionary rhetoric – 'significant student movement' substituted for a 'coherent and militant' one, 'socialist practice within culture' for 'revolutionary practice within culture.' These may be significant changes for some studies, but make no substantial difference to Anderson's thesis about the Central European emigration. I have worked from the 1992 version throughout.

[14] Perry Anderson, 'Components', p. 48.

[15] Ibid., p. 50.

[16] Ibid., p. 62. The only exception among the disciplines is literary criticism, which Anderson implies is largely inaccessible to non-natives on linguistic grounds, and was, he argues, in any case under the 'home-grown' domination of F.R. Leavis at the time of the article's first publication.

[17] Ibid., p. 61.

'instinctive, *ad hoc* affair' of British empiricism and conservatism.[18] Rather than give British culture the 'articulation of the social whole itself' which Anderson finds to be historically lacking,[19] these émigrés offered a mirror in which 'every insular reflex and prejudice was powerfully flattered and enlarged in the mirror they presented to it [...] They both reinforced the existing orthodoxy, and [by finding themselves a niche in a stagnant intellectual culture] exploited its weakness'.[20]

In philosophy, Wittgenstein 'evacuated time from language, and thereby converted it into an ahistorical absolute',[21] avoiding acknowledgement of historical change in usage and thought; Hans-Jürgen Eysenck's (1916-1997) psychology brought public renown and scientific credibility to the establishment of an ahistorical 'identification between fascism and communism – contrasted with democratic creeds such as conservatism or liberalism';[22] and in art history and aesthetics, Ernst Gombrich's 'psychologism [...] simulate[d] time more than it recover[ed] it',[23] allowing for an account of artistic technique and the psychology of perception which minimizes the importance of social and historical changes. Time and again, Anderson claims to encounter Central European intellectuals 'systematiz[ing] refusal of system'[24] and giving an intellectual coherence and robustness to a traditionally British denial of theoretical and analytic perspectives that might occasion change.

Anderson's thesis is bold and broadly sketched out. To cover as many disciplines as he does, he is forced to focus on celebrated or outstanding intellectual figures, essaying only generalized criticism of each. However, it is precisely this

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[18] Ibid., p. 64.
[19] Ibid., p. 56.
[20] Ibid., p. 63.
[21] Ibid., p. 69.
[22] Ibid., p. 82.
[23] Ibid., p. 87.
[24] Ibid., p. 64.

willingness to venture a contestable and even controversial thesis which makes an almost forty-year-old essay still relevant and valuable to students of the German-speaking scholarly migration to Britain. If lack of a knowledge base (and the need to interview émigrés before their generation dies out) explains why 'exile studies' has been prone to chronicle rather than analyse its own subject matter, it is still a weakness of the field in need of correction. All too often, works on the intellectual emigration of the 1930s have been encyclopaedic rather that critical; this limits their engagement with Anderson's argument. References to 'Components of the National Culture' by two significant commentators on the scholarly migration to the UK, Johannes Feichtinger and Daniel Snowman, provide cases in point.

1.1.2 Responses to Anderson

Feichtinger's *Wissenschaft zwischen den Kulturen* is not without its analytic value, eschewing as it does national perspectives in favour of transnational 'network analyses' derived from the work of Pierre Bourdieu. However, it is comprehensive rather than critical in its tracing and contextualising of individual scholarly flights from Austria. Anderson's essay cannot be avoided by Feichtinger, but is paid only passing attention: Feichtinger's work is focussed on the displacement of intellectuals more than the consequences of this displacement for the destination country, convincingly arguing that marginalized Austrian intellectuals formed extrauniversity associations that proved useful in the emigration. Because of this focus, Feichtinger attends more to Anderson's suggestion that émigrés consciously chose America or Great Britain on the grounds of

their conservatism or radicalism than to Anderson's controversial and challenging thesis about the influence worked by exiles once established.[25]

Similarly marginal mention of 'Components of the National Culture' is found in Daniel Snowman's recent book of popular history, *The Hitler Émigrés: The Cultural Impact on Britain of Refugees from Nazism,* which deals precisely with the contribution refugees and exiles made to British national culture. Snowman discusses Anderson's thesis briefly in his book's endnotes, but does little more than summarize the original argument.[26] Although a popular rather than critical work of history, it is perhaps disappointing that Snowman's book, bearing the subtitle it does, should respond to Anderson with only a comment that 'there may be some *ex post facto* truth in Anderson's polarised categories; but in practice most refugees made for wherever they happened to have a friend or relative, or prospects of work'.[27]

My own thesis, as should be clear, does not focus on any 'pull-factors' Britain may have had for Austrians planning their flight, but rather on those émigrés' work in the context of emigration. Snowman did briefly address this issue in a article published one year after his book, also titled 'The Hitler Émigrés: The Cultural Impact on Britain of Refugees from Nazism'. There, Snowman raises Anderson's broader question of ideological differences between German and Austrian émigrés:

> Did German and Austrian refugees leave a different mark on their new homeland? Perry Anderson once argued that the German émigrés tended to be the more radical and gravitated towards the United States (he had in mind people like Brecht, or some of the Frankfurt philosophers), whereas those raised in old Austria-Hungary such as Popper, Gombrich and Hayek found conservative, class-bound Britain more of a magnet. I find this too schematic. I can think of many conservative figures who made their homes in the United States (Hayek

[25] See Feichtinger, p. 42.
[26] See Snowman, *The Hitler Émigrés*, pp. 417-418.
[27] Ibid., p. 418.

> himself in later life) and plenty of radicals who settled in the U.K. (think of Isaac Deutscher, Eric Hobsbawm or the cartoonist Vicky, for example). [...] I would argue that there was, nevertheless, a difference between the *impact* of the emigration from Nazism on British and American cultural life and that, overall, it was probably greater here in Britain. It is not only that the numbers who came to the U.K. were proportionately larger. In addition, Britain was a comparatively homogeneous society in the nineteen-thirties in which a sudden wave of migrants had a greater cumulative impact than in the U.S.A. which, after all, had historically been built up by waves and waves of immigrants. In America, too, the émigrés were soon dispersed all over the country – to New York and New Haven, Boston and Black Mountain College, Los Alamos and Los Angeles. In the U.K., by contrast, they were more concentrated, forming something like what the physicists among them would have called a 'critical mass'.[28]

Once again, Snowman avoids understanding Anderson in terms of the émigrés' impact on ideologies of national culture. His comment on the 'critical mass' only leads away from Anderson's argument to a defence of Snowman's own self-conscious 'elitism' in choosing to give a historical account of émigré 'tall poppies', celebrated figures from Emeric Pressburger to George Weidenfeld.

One way of addressing some of the issues which Anderson raises – above all the questions of what and how scholarly émigrés contributed to British intellectual life – while keeping the benefit of both Snowman's attention to the specific British case and Feichtinger's interest in transnational perspectives, is to investigate the form and progress of émigré intellectual tendencies over the course of a single scholar's migration and subsequent career.

In particular, this thesis examines Ernst Gombrich's representation of Aby Warburg as both a work of scholarship and a memorial site in which personally and emotionally significant values could be invested. This move brings my thesis into contact with a significant approach already existing in studies of émigré scholarship –

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[28] Daniel Snowman, 'The Hitler Émigrés: The Cultural Impact on Britain of Refugees from Nazism', *Historical Research,* 77 (2004), 437-458 (pp. 441-442).

'Reading Works for Lives' – and also brings us to a broader discussion of my thesis' methodology.

1.2 Memory, anthropology and 'reading works for lives': a methodology

1.2.1 From the intellectual history of migration to memory studies

Scholars in emigration faced a life-changing event which often forced them to drastically renegotiate personal and professional identities in establishing themselves in a new country. Understanding their scholarship today requires the historian to examine questions of how memory, identity and scholarship might interact.

As Gerald Hartung and Kay Schiller put it in the introduction to their volume *Weltoffener Humanismus,* 'nach all den Diskussionen über den Historismus, Relativismus, Positivismus, Strukturalismus, Poststrukturalismus [...] eine Geschichtsschreibung ins Zentrum des Interesses zurückkehrt, die vom individuellen Lebensmoment und seinen Objektivationsformen – wenn sich das Leben in das erzählte Leben einschreibt – ihren Ausgangspunkt nimmt'. This assessment of the current state of historiography leads to their own hypothesis regarding the scholarly emigration from Central Europe – 'daß das wissenschaftliche Werk [of German-Jewish humanist scholars] in einem signifikanten Maß als Antwort auf die je eigene Lebenssituation und

als Produkt einer anhaltenden Suche nach emblembatischen Denkmodellen für die Bewältigung existenzieller Fragen gelesen werden kann'.[29]

This move and others similar are widespread in the current intellectual history of the 1930s scholarly emigration: Schiller has elsewhere given us the scholarship of émigrés Ernst Kantorowicz (1895-1963) and Hans Baron (1900-1988) as *Gelehrte Gegenwelten*, intellectual realms in which to figure an opposition to National Socialism;[30] Warren Boutcher indicates how we might read Paul Oskar Kristeller's (1905-1999) study of Marsilio Ficino as lending its subject 'precisely the virtues we associate with Kristeller's own scholarship';[31] Karl Popper's biographer Malachi Haim Hacohen finds the philosopher 'seems to have read his hopes for Central Europe into [the] Athens' of his scholarship;[32] and Keith Moxey, taking a psychoanalytic approach to Erwin Panofsky's (1892-1968) work on Dürer, suggests that in reading *Melancholia I* as 'the artist's spiritual self-portrait', this émigré art historian was in fact dealing with his own anxieties over exile from Germany.[33] A scholar's emotions and anxieties, and her personal identity, come to be seen as inextricably entwined with the process and product of historical scholarship. To make such readings of scholarship need not prejudice the works' intellectual value. Rather, it allows us to examine the ways in which the context of a scholar's life and work shaped what was said and written, and how it was received.

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[29] Gerald Hartung and Kay Schiller, 'Einführung', in *Weltoffener Humanismus. Philosophie, Geschichte und Literaturwissenschaft in der deutsch-jüdischen Emigration*, ed. by Kay Schiller and Gerald Hartung (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2006), pp.7-12 (p. 7).

[30] Kay Schiller, *Gelehrte Gegenwelten: Humanistische Leitbilder im 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2000).

[31] Warren Boutcher, 'The Making of the Humane Philosopher: Paul Oskar Kristeller and Twentieth-Century Intellectual History', in *Kristeller Reconsidered: Essays on his Life and Scholarship*, ed. by John Monfasani (New York: Italica Press, 2006), pp. 39-70 (p. 61).

[32] Malachi Haim Hacohen, *Karl Popper - The Formative Years, 1902-1945: Politics and Philosophy in Interwar Vienna* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 415.

[33] Keith Moxey, *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 65-78.

A brief examination of an alternative approach to the intellectual history of émigré scholars demonstrates the need for such close attention to historical context. Sheldon Richmond's 1994 *Aesthetic Criteria: Gombrich and the Philosophies of Science of Popper and Polanyi* attempts, from within the critical-rationalist tradition established by Karl Popper, to explore an alleged refusal on Gombrich's part to apply Popperian thought to aesthetics.[34] Richmond attempts to demonstrate affinities between Gombrich's position on aesthetics and the anti-scientific philosophy of Michael Polanyi (1891-1976). Intent on demonstrating the possibility of a critical-rationalist and 'objective', rather than commitment-based, approach to artistic values, Richmond does not consider the common background of Gombrich, Popper and Polanyi. All three men were émigrés of Jewish background from Central Europe; all are connected with the development of the idea of a cosmopolitan 'scholarly republic', which Richmond does not discuss.[35] Even if the significance of Central European or Jewish identities is debatable within the intellectual history of Gombrich, Popper and their peers, it is difficult to accept Richmond's claim that, 'The central question of this book is ['W]hy doesn't Gombrich apply Popper to aesthetics[?']' when no attempt is made to investigate the history of personal relations between these well-known friends.[36]

The notion of 'reading works for lives' is self-evidently broad and lends itself to a range of approaches and agendas, from Moxey's psychoanalytic history of art history to forms of history-writing which would regard themselves as methodologically more pragmatic. My own thesis, focussing as it does on one scholar's re-working of a predecessor's personal, institutional and intellectual legacy in emigration, crosses over with the terrain of contemporary memory studies. This relatively young field shares

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[34] Sheldon Richmond, *Aesthetic Criteria: Gombrich and the Philosophies of Science of Popper and Polanyi* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1994).
[35] Popper and Gombrich's relationship to this significant term is discussed at 3.2.1 below. On Polanyi's use of the term, see Hacohen, *Karl Popper – The Formative Years*, p. 53 fn. 104.
[36] Richmond, p. 150.

much with contemporary approaches to émigré scholarship: like the practice of 'reading works for lives', memory studies tend to an interdisciplinary approach and to a broad subject matter which includes the intimately private as well as the public spheres, the most fragmentary as well as the most substantial evidence, and material ranging from the most institutional in form to the most personal and idiosyncratic. In addition, at least one commentator on German history has noted a historiographical turn towards the investigation of the Nazi years' representation in postwar Germany which resonates with my own thesis' examination of Warburg's 'afterlife' in emigration.[37]

Amongst the most pressing debates within memory studies today are those dealing with the relative standing of individual and collective memories, and those over the ways in which scholars access the emotions of historical actors. These are dealt with in the following section. My negotiation of these issues seeks to account for scholarly engagement with the emotions of émigré scholars by drawing on anthropological theories, and to understand the relative importance of the individual and their wider community by drawing on Pierre Nora's *lieu de mémoire* model of the investment in and exploitation of symbolic, memorial material.

1.2.2 Contemporary memory studies – from the collective to the individual

The field of contemporary memory studies can scarcely be addressed without acknowledging the contribution of the French scholar Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945). His sociological approach to the consciousness of time, shaped by the work of Henri

[37] Alon Confino, 'Telling About Germany: Narratives of Memory and Culture', *Journal of Modern History*, 76 (2004), 389-416.

Bergson (1859-1941) and Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), laid emphasis on memory's existence within a social context and structure.[38] This emphasis makes Halbwachs' notion of the 'collective memory' shared between members of a community into a powerful analytical tool, but it is also not without its problems and complications. As commentator Nancy Wood puts it,

> The difficulty [in defining 'collective memory'] arises because while it is axiomatic to acknowledge that since memory arises from lived experience only individuals can remember, the notion of 'collective memory' allows us to signal some tangible presence of the past that can be discerned beyond the level of the individual and in specific social milieux.[39]

A 1997 special edition of *American Historical Review* devoted to issues of history and memory included a piece by Alon Confino, titled 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method'. Its progressive critique of 'memory studies' begins by acknowledging that the usefulness of collective memory as a concept may lie in 'its open-endedness, because it is applicable to historical situations and human conditions in diverse societies and periods'.[40] However, this open-endedness is a source of preoccupation as much as intellectual fruitfulness:

> [the] history of memory defined topically becomes a field with neither a center nor connections among topics. It runs the danger of becoming an assemblage of distinct topics that describe in a predictable way how people construct the past. [...] We need to question the methods of memory studies, by way of refining our approaches and proposing new connections [...] Only when linked to historical questions and problems, via methods and theories, can memory be illuminating.[41]

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[38] See Lewis A. Coser, 'Introduction: Maurice Halbwachs 1877-1945' in Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. by Lewis A. Coser (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 1-34.

[39] Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999), p. 1.

[40] Alon Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *American Historical Review*, 102 (1997), 1386-1403 (p.1387).

[41] Ibid., pp.1387-8.

Appearing in the same journal issue as Confino's article was a piece by Susan Crane which offers a potential response to his challenge – 'Writing the Individual Back Into Collective Memory'.[42]

Crane examines the way that historical narrative as a form lies within the broader framework of a community's collective memory. Arguing that 'the difference between form and framework has come to be understood as one created by the professionalization of history',[43] Crane seeks a redefined historical consciousness lying between collective memory and historical narrative, raising vital questions:

> Do we [as historians] create forms of historical representation because history is past, or do we create them because history is present? Do we write history because we have experienced it ourselves, or do we see ourselves as looking at something that is distant and virtually lost to us? Most imperative, who is this "us" or you or me that thinks historically? The answers to these questions – and they will be plural – can help historians think about how collective memory may in fact already constitute a fundamental aspect of their work.[44]

Crane states, drawing on her study of cultures of memory and historical preservation in nineteenth-century Germany, that 'the increasingly professionalised role of historians as those publicly entrusted with the duty of memory and commemoration apparently made it incumbent upon practicing historians to retract almost all vestiges of personal memories or personal involvement in the production of history'.[45]

She argues that it is possible to re-read Halbwachs in such a way that the possibility is raised of recombining historical representation and collective memory, 'relocating the collective back in the individual who articulates it [...] A revised notion

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[42] Susan A. Crane, 'Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory', *American Historical Review*, 102 (1997), 1372-85.
[43] Ibid., p.1373.
[44] Ibid., p.1374.
[45] Ibid., p.1375.

of collective memory may provide a theoretical basis for imagining a different kind of historical memory, which would focus on the way individuals experience themselves as historical entities'.[46] This is supported by Nancy Wood's acknowledgement that if Halbwachs is read carefully, it can be seen that his work treats

> memory not as a monolithic mental image of the past internalized in the same way by all members of a given society, but as the diverse representational modes by means of which communities imagine, represent and enact their specific relationship to the past.[47]

Susan Crane's work has been taken up by, among others, oral historian Anna Green, for whom,

> Historians are increasingly focussing upon the ways in which individual recollections fit (often unconscious) cultural scripts or templates. There is apparently little space for the consciously reflective individual, or for the role of experience in changing the ways in which individuals view the world. As a consequence, oral history is converging with collective memory studies, within which individual memory is either subsumed under 'collective memory', or assigned to the realm of the passive unconscious.[48]

Green's response is to emphasize how different 'mnemonic contexts', such as the writing of an autobiography, reminiscing amongst friends, and oral history interviews, shape the way in which the past is conjured and represented. Green calls for her peers to 're-assert the value of individual remembering, and the capacity of the conscious self to contest and critique cultural scripts or discourses'.[49]

Oral history's use of interviewees as primary sources is, in this respect, a blessing. The tool of the interview allows for a particularly credible engagement with

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[46] Ibid., p.1375.
[47] Wood, p. 17.
[48] Anna Green, 'Individual Remembering and 'Collective Memory': Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates', *Oral History*, 32 (2004), 35-45 (p.36).
[49] Ibid., p.41.

the feelings and memories of the historian's subject, one denied to historians who research more distant pasts, such that of the largely deceased émigré generation studied in this thesis. Where the historical actor is no longer able to speak for themselves and the researcher must resort to the archive, a particularly sensitive approach to emotions and memory is required if we are to 'write the individual back into collective memory'. More and more, students of memory and interested historians have turned to the discipline of anthropology for inspiration and support in this field.

1.2.3 The anthropology of emotions in memory studies

In a 2003 article, 'Feeling and Thinking in Memory and Forgetting: Toward an Ethnohistory of the Emotions', ethnohistorian Michael E. Harkin begins to imagine a new approach to memory and emotion as he calls for practitioners of his discipline to negotiate between two poles of historical explanation. On one hand he critiques the excessive individualism of a history based on the insights of the day's psychology: 'Rather than assuming we know what these feelings [experienced by our objects of study] are, through an unexamined universalism, it is necessary to make the emotional categories themselves the subject of interrogation.'[50] On the other hand, Harkin also argues that Foucauldian and Marxist approaches to emotions and memory as contingent and discursive domains are at particular risk of leading scholars to 'a point where we are not talking about emotion any longer but about a rather peculiar culturally situated

[50] Michael E. Harkin, 'Feeling and Thinking in Memory and Forgetting: Toward an Ethnohistory of the Emotions', *Ethnohistory*, 50 (2003), 262-284 (p.268).

discourse on emotion, which says more about its culture of origin than about the cultures it purports to study'.[51]

An article published in the same year in the *History Workshop Journal* addresses many of the same issues, and suggests a possible way of negotiating the difficulties of historicising the emotions. Joanna Bourke's 'Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History' recognizes that in this field 'the primary problem has been to define what emotions actually 'are' and decide how historians can most productively study them'.[52]

Bourke is, like Harkin, wary of psychohistory, arguing that 'there is no reason to assume that historical actors are psychologically 'packaged' in the same way as the patients analysed by Freud. Too often, psychoanalytical explanations for emotional responses emerge out of the model itself'.[53] This argument can be extended to psychological models developed by psychoanalysts succeeding Freud, as well as other schools of psychology.

At the other of Harkin's poles, the social constructivist, Bourke is similarly critical of such approaches' imposition of 'an absolute plasticity on the individual, always in thrall to disciplining discourses and institutions'.[54] She reminds her readers that emotion ''bunches' individuals in different ways', so that 'it is not the case that all members of the working classes feared the same thing, or that all women or all

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[51] Ibid., p.266.
[52] Joanna Bourke, 'Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History', *History Workshop Journal*, 55 (2003), 111-133 (pp.112-3).
[53] Ibid., p.116.
[54] Ibid., p.122.

members of an ethnic community shared emotional experiences'.[55] Bourke's response is to follow other historians in turning to

> anthropological insights into the emotions. For the archivally-inclined historian, it seemed to make sense to jettison monolithic definitions or theories of fear in favour of much more fluid approaches focussing on historical shifts in the 'language of fear'. After all, emotions entered the historical archive only to the extent that they transcended the insularity of individual psychological sensation and 'presented the self within society'.[56]

Bourke turns to William M. Reddy's polemic against strong social constructivist stances in 'Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions'. Reddy's historical anthropology emphasizes the dynamic and idiosyncratic qualities of emotional language and gesture, resisting attempts to reduce them to either 'discourse' on Michel Foucault's model or a notion of 'practice' following Pierre Bourdieu or Anthony Giddens.[57]

Reddy's polemic against 'strong constructionist stances' in the social science of emotion is particularly relevant in its application to contemporary ethnography, where it is used to give emphasis to the social and political context of emotions. Anthropologists Maruška Švašek and Carolin Leutloff are among those who have applied Reddy's work in this way. In their studies, emotions are framed by what might be called 'concerns': the individual's historical and contingent dispositions to be affected by the actions and vicissitudes of other social actors. For Švašek, '"emotional judgements and claims" [are] reactions to socially and culturally construed expectations and norms'.[58] Leutloff similarly makes analytical use of 'definitions of emotional judgments that stress their

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[55] Ibid., p.124.
[56] Ibid., p.116.
[57] See William M. Reddy, 'Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions', *Current Anthropology*, 38 (1997), 327-251.
[58] Maruška Švašek, 'The Politics of Emotions. Emotional Discourses and Displays in Post-Cold War Contexts', *Focaal – European Journal of Anthropology*, 39 (2002), 9-27 (p. 15).

cultural construction in a social and political context',[59] and another anthropologist, Abram de Swann, is in concurrence when he suggests that concerns, in the form of identification with a group, are 'a necessary condition for [...] a person's dispositions to be emotionally affected, "dispositions that can underlie the entire gamut of emotions."'[60] Rather than offering us historical or ethnographic subjects who 'think and feel like we do today' or who are puppets of a cultural discourse, the approach outlined here gives an account of actors making choices within the context of their emotional concerns.

For Joanna Bourke, in Reddy's approach,

> Emphasis on what fear [or any other emotion] is *doing* avoids the constructivists' dilemma that the fear-speak or fear-act *is* the fear (a position inviting the conclusion that if men [*sic*] neither acted frightened nor said they were frightened, then they were not frightened).[61]

Bourke's proposal, which derives from Reddy, coincides with Bill Schwarz's suggestion, in his study of West Indian scholars who migrated to the United Kingdom, that it is the bringing of time to consciousness that might be the most fruitful field of study for those intrigued by history and memory. He offers, albeit hesitantly and shorn of an anthropological framework, the possibility that researchers might profitably pursue

> something like a phenomenology of *historical* time, as a way of trying to reach the lived, interior forms of temporality, including both memory and historical time? What would it look like? Would it help us understand the ways in which 'history' is lived? I'm not suggesting that we can resolve historiographical

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[59] Carolin Leutloff, 'Claiming Ownership in Post-war Croatia: the Emotional Dynamics of Possession and Repossession in Knin', *Focaal – European Journal of Anthropology*, 39 (2002), 73-92 (p. 75).
[60] Abram De Swann, 'Widening Circles of Identification: Emotional Concerns in Sociogenetic Perspective', *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 12 (1995), 25-39 (p. 25).
[61] Bourke, p.124.

problems by displacing them on to the terrain of phenomenology. But in the transactions something might happen.[62]

Schwarz's work, and in particular 'Not Even Past Yet', an article in the *History Workshop Journal* based on a Raphael Samuel Memorial Lecture, returns us directly to the historical and memorial consciousness of émigré intellectuals in Britain. Schwarz's discussion of C.L.R. James (1901-1989), for example, chimes with those studies of German-Jewish scholars which have found contemporary concerns alive in their representation of the past. Schwarz suggests that although James was silent over the uprisings in the Caribbean in the 1930s, his writings on nineteenth-century leader Toussaint L'Ouverture articulated concerns about his own time. Schwarz develops the discussion of historical consciousness still further, seeking a more complex consciousness of the historical past and asking if it is possible to 'imagine a notion of historical consciousness – an idea deeply imbricated in the Hegelian system – without also taking on the accompanying categories of absolutes and universals?'[63]

The fact that Schwarz's subjects were professional historians is of absolute importance. He argues that it means their memories were 'located in an unusually complex consciousness of the shape of the historical past' and, furthermore, that these memories 'alert us to a specific issue: the capacities for historical time to be known and to be made conscious. They invite us to ask the question how historical time can be lived'. They invite us, Schwarz writes, to consider at the level of the individual how 'the past in all its myriad forms is governed and articulated in the contemporary moment, and organised by contemporary determinations'.[64]

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[62] Bill Schwarz, 'Not Even Past Yet', *History Workshop Journal*, 57 (2004), 101-115 (p.104).
[63] Ibid., p.107.
[64] Ibid., pp.102-3.

In making this invitation, which is directly relevant to the émigré scholar experiences I am investigating, Schwarz acknowledges a debt to the French historian Pierre Nora, whose theories of the *lieu de mémoire* not only inspire Schwarz but structure and sustain my own thesis in its attempt to understand the concerns and personal investments that émigré scholars made in their intellectual work.

1.2.4 The individual, memory, and the *lieu de mémoire*

Nora's contribution to memory studies centres on his concept of the *lieu de mémoire*. *Lieux de mémoire* are, in the words of his essay 'Between Memory and History', the sites 'in which memory is crystallized, in which it finds refuge',[65] where continuity with the past persists in an epoch when 'experience, still lived in the warmth of tradition, in the silence of custom, in the repetition of the ancestral, has been swept away by a surge of deeply historical sensibility'.[66] This displacement, and the destruction of *milieux de mémoire*, evoked as warm and authentic environments of lived memory, have been caused by irrevocable historical breaks such as the Shoah, the end of peasant culture, postcolonial independence movements and the 'interior decolonisation' of previously marginalized peoples within a nation's homeland.

In this modern world, Nora argues, the intellectual operations of professional history have replaced the past as 'perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present' with a mere 'representation of the past' shaped by the demands of

[65] Pierre Nora, 'General Introduction: Between Memory and History', in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, under the direction of Pierre Nora, ed. by Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), I, pp.1-20 (p.7).
[66] Ibid., p.1.

supposed scientific objectivity, as well as by political agendas at the level of the nation and the academy. Where memory remains 'in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to appropriation and manipulation, and capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be suddenly reawakened,' history is

> the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer [...] an intellectual, nonreligious activity, [which] calls for analysis and critical discourse. Memory situated remembrance in a sacred context. History ferrets it out; it turns whatever it touches into prose.[67]

At first Nora's thesis can, to empiricist ears, sound in both its argument and its poetics reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's 'The Storyteller'. That essay conjures a haunted milieu of the past, in which it was the sacred role of the storyteller 'to fashion the raw material of experience, his own and that of others, in a solid, useful, and unique way'.[68] Benjamin writes that the figure of the storyteller belongs among

> the ranks of the teachers and sages. [...] For it is granted to him to reach back a whole lifetime (a life, incidentally, that comprises not only his own experience but no little of the experience of others; what the storyteller knows from hearsay is added to his own).[69]

However, Nora differs from Benjamin significantly, not least in the quantities of evidence which he amasses for his investigation of the world which succeeds this departed milieu: the visionary Benjaminian fragment is replaced by the group endeavour of an encyclopaedic, empirical and social-scientific multi-volume project. Nora's enduring *lieux de mémoire* are specifiable: 'Museums, archives, cemeteries, collections, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries,

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[67] Ibid., p.3.
[68] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), p.107.
[69] Ibid., p.107.

private associations'.[70] In his examples – among them, the Arc de Triomphe, the *Dictionnaire Larousse*, the new calendar of Revolutionary France – we see symbolic and functional sites devoted to times gone by, whose material aspect is vital to substantiating them as bulwarks against anxiety at the erosion of the meaning of that past, 'constitut[ing],' as Nancy Wood puts it, 'the bedrock of a community's symbolic repertoire'.[71] The *lieux de mémoire* authorize the French identities studied in Nora's project with the power of memorial and emotional concerns.

The *lieu de mémoire* concept has proved particularly popular in exploring the field of national memory. In addition to Nora's project on the French past, the *lieu de mémoire* makes recurring appearance in studies of Eastern and Central Europe, where the instability of nation-states on the 'Western' model has created a plurality of overlapping 'national memories' in need of negotiation.[72] My own work on Austrian history and memory provides an example. In an article, 'Official History, Private Memories: 'Vienna 1900' as *lieu de mémoire*', I investigated the deployment of representations of Vienna at the turn of the century in late-twentieth-century attempts to negotiate the legacy of Austria under the Nazis.[73] The article argued that the Austrian state, in seeking to avoid association with the National Socialist regime and the anti-Semitic actions of Austrians even prior to the 1938 *Anschluss*, conjured a sentimentalized image of 'Vienna 1900' in a variety of media, balancing this vision of urban progressivism with a comfortably rural *lieu de mémoire*, free of Jewish influence situated in Salzburg's Alpine landscape. Against this government-led depiction of the past – historical in one of Nora's senses, in that it was prosaic, largely anonymous, and

[70] Nora, 'General Introduction', p.6.
[71] Wood, pp.15-16.
[72] See the studies collected in *Transnationale Gedächtnisorte in Zentraleuropa*, ed. by Jacques Le Rider, Moritz Csáky and Monika Sommer (Innsbruck: Studien-Verlag, 2002).
[73] Matthew Finch, 'Official History, Private Memories: 'Vienna 1900' as *lieu de mémoire*', *Central Europe*, 2 (2004), 109-132.

institutional in its operations, but also exploitative of the affective qualities of the *lieu de mémoire* – I set out the emotive memories of Vienna's contemporary Jewish community. These visions of Vienna were magical and memorial in the sense that they evoked, with no small degree of inconsistency, a moment of the past to which many Viennese Jews, being the children of postwar immigrants to the city, have no direct link other than through novels, histories and other cultural artefacts.

My article exposed some of the potential weaknesses as well as the benefits of the *lieu de mémoire* as tool of cultural history. ''Vienna 1900' as *lieu de mémoire*' was premised on a simplistic opposition between individual remembrancers in the Jewish community and an anonymous state-sponsored history. Such polarisations both deny the activities of the individual social actors who comprise any institution and obscure the various schemas that may underlie individuals' apparently idiosyncratic or inconsistent affective recall of the past. Susan Crane has suggested that, for the student of memory looking to figure the individual memorialist as an agent capable of independent interpretation, it is possible to read the work of Nora and find, at worst, only an agentless will to remember.[74] Although the 'memory-individual' exists in Nora's *lieux de mémoire,* their task is one of reinforcing the threatened collectivity, 'an inner voice [...] tell[ing] each Corsican "You must be Corsican" and each Breton "you must be Breton"'.[75]

However, the researcher who chooses the figure of the émigré professional scholar as a topic, as I have in this thesis, is liberated from such broad and reductive mapping of the negotiations between 'history', 'memory' and even 'nation' as Nora applies these terms. Émigré scholar 'memory-individuals' are professionally affiliated

[74] See Crane, p. 1380.
[75] Nora, 'General Introduction', p. 11.

with the institution of academic history to which they might supposedly be opposed; they are also doubly estranged from the 'nation' by geography and ethnonationalist persecution. Studying their lives has the potential to free the intellectual historian from the pigeon-holing quality of Nora's categorisations, while preserving the positive conceptual benefits of the *lieu de mémoire* – above all its flexibility in the face of monolithic 'collective memories'.

Bill Schwarz's use of Nora in his short article is exemplary in this regard, emphatic as it is in stressing the fact that his subjects were professional historians, probing deeper into the occlusion of historians' personal involvement in the production of history already broadly identified by Susan Crane. The current project aims to go yet further in producing a sustained and sensitive reading of the historical evidence in order to understand the scholarship of Central European émigrés as a form of memory and to understand the emotional, personal qualities of their relationship to that scholarship.

1.3 Ernst Gombrich and the memory of Aby Warburg: an outline of the thesis

In what follows, the *lieu de mémoire* concept is applied to a topic – scholarship with a memorial focus (Gombrich's work on Aby Warburg) – that falls across Nora's boundary between 'prosaic' history and 'erratic' memory. The principal point is not to offer a documentary history of either Gombrich or the Warburg Institute in emigration. It is to explore the way emotional concerns affect scholarship, to draw on diverse materials to study the construction, representation and contestation of the posthumous

Aby Warburg as *lieu de mémoire*. The agendas of individual scholars will be examined in the context of both intellectual history and the emotional, affective elements of their personal lives, with Gombrich's Warburg as one among a range of uses of the Warburg legacy. Gombrich's representation of Warburg is an unimpeachably scholarly one, but I shall demonstrate that it cannot be extricated from the emotional concerns of its author, concerns that played a role in the construction of a tradition of émigré scholarship in Britain. They centrally include a deeply felt personal attachment to the German-language humanist culture of *Bildung*.

The thesis comprises four main chapters, with an introduction and conclusion. The opening chapter sets out a detailed account of Gombrich's life and career so as to better understand his specific approach and his contribution to postwar scholarship. I pay close attention to his activities as a theorist of pictorial representation and cultural history, a scholar of the Renaissance, and a popularizer of art history.

This is followed by a chapter which considers Gombrich's relationship to *Bildungskultur* in the light of histories of Jewish identity and assimilation in German-speaking Europe. The factors which shaped Gombrich's identity in emigration are discussed in the light of wider contemporary debates over the significance of Jewish culture and identity in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Central Europe. In particular, the notion of a cosmopolitan 'Central European' identity – associated above all with Gombrich and with Karl Popper – is examined alongside archival materials which help us to understand the extent to which concerns regarding Jewishness were a significant factor in the actions and attitudes of Gombrich and his fellow émigrés.

The third chapter focuses on Gombrich's biographical representation of Aby Warburg. The argument has two aims: firstly, to establish the possibility of reading Warburg's specific posthumous representations as *lieux de mémoire*; secondly, to examine Gombrich's biographical work in the light of an ongoing critical reception which questions that work's neglect of issues of ethnic identity and mental health. The contrast between Gombrich's work and that of contemporary scholars highlights the ways in which Gombrich's own concerns were shaping his scholarship through emigration and beyond, and leaving a long term mark on intellectual culture.

In the final chapter, we return to the archive to understand the genesis of the Warburg biographical project in the Institute of the 1930s, and trace that project up to the point of publication in 1970. We examine the preliminary agendas and biographical researches of Fritz Saxl and Gertrud Bing in the period before the emigration from Germany and the arrival of Gombrich at the Warburg Institute. The demands which the emigration placed on Warburg's biographers are investigated, in particular in terms of the need to adapt the project for the Institute's new host culture. The potential of Gertrud Bing's pre- and postwar work on Warburg as a valuable alternative to Gombrich's seemingly definitive account is considered. This chapter is crucial because its analysis of key items in the record of Gombrich's engagement with Warburg capitalises upon the materials and arguments that have been built up in the three preceding chapters. Gombrich's emotionally charged devotion to cosmopolitan humanism is seen as the driving force behind his criticism of what he saw as unacceptably unscholarly work by Warburg, Freud and others.

In the conclusion to the thesis, we apply some of its findings to other work by Gombrich, then consider the potential for aspects of the Warburg legacy – neglected by

Gombrich – to flourish in present-day academia. Finally, we consider Gombrich's own afterlife since his death in 2001 as a *lieu de mémoire*.

2.0 The life and work of Ernst Gombrich

The prominent émigré art historian Ernst Gombrich is a figure particularly suited to a study of scholarship and emigration. His emigration at a relatively early stage of his academic career marks the transnational displacement as a significant event in his intellectual development. The high profile he would win in his host country, the United Kingdom, left a pronounced impact on Anglophone scholarship which merits careful investigation. His long association with the Warburg Institute, itself an émigré institution, is also of clear significance. The esteem in which Gombrich was widely held and the sheer volume of material he produced were both great. Indeed, if any émigré intellectual was producing output of a quantity and prestige to influence a national culture's 'basic concepts of humanity' in the way Perry Anderson has alleged, it was this Austrian-born migrant to the United Kingdom. In the country which accepted him as a naturalized subject, he carried great weight in his roles as Director of London's Warburg Institute and, after retirement, as a respected all-purpose intellectual commentator, speaking on topics from classical music to contemporary issues in higher education. He could be seen to 'dominate the theory of pictorial art' in Britain with his work on pictorial representation and the psychology of art;[1] his work as a historian of Renaissance art was also significant and prolific, running to four volumes in collected form. As a popularizer he was a great success, responsible for the perennial international favourite *The Story of Art*. Beneath the popular works of art history, however, there also remained an ideological commitment to the distinctive, intellectually robust and historically mature culture of German-language humanism, or *Bildung*.

[1] Perry Anderson, 'Components', p. 84.

In advance of later chapters' discussion of Gombrich's work on the memory of Aby Warburg, this chapter gives a resumé of Gombrich's life and career; his intellectual influences and his key works in the theory of art and Renaissance art history; and his distinctive approach to cultural history, including the question of his complex relationship to the work of Freud. It concludes by identifying the significance of the culture of *Bildung* and of his war-time experiences for his scholarship.

2.1 The life of Ernst Gombrich

Ernst Gombrich was born in 1909, in Vienna, to Leonie Hock, a pianist and music teacher, and Karl Gombrich, a lawyer. Gombrich was the middle child between an older sister, Dea, and the younger Lisbeth. Gombrich's parents were of Jewish background, although they were clearly assimilated into the secular Austrian community and Gombrich denied any Jewish influence on his character or upbringing.[2] Although born in the era of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Gombrich was only a child when the empire broke up.

One of the anecdotes in his book *A Lifelong Interest* suggests the extent to which Gombrich was in truth a child of the Austrian Republic. Gombrich recalls an anniversary of the Republic's founding at which his younger self, unimpressed with a primary school headmistress' former tradition of delivering an address before Franz Josef's portrait on the emperor's birthday, recited a poem about worker bees revolting

[2] See Chapter 2 for an extensive discussion of Gombrich's attitudes to Jewish identity.

against their queen.[3] Despite this rather radical manifesto offered by the prepubescent Gombrich, his family was in fact committed to the cause of liberalism, a commitment which would survive emigration to Great Britain in the form of a close association with the prominent liberal Bonham-Carter family.[4] As an adult, Gombrich seems to have been remarkably apolitical. Although he voted Labour throughout his life in Britain,[5] he looked back on 'the Red and the Black' of Vienna's interwar left and right as squabblers who failed to recognise the real threat of the Nazis,[6] and in later scholarship he would describe the entire notion of dividing politics into right- and left-wings as a 'one-dimensional arrangement of the *terribles simplificateurs*'.[7]

As a child, Gombrich and his sister Lisbeth were taken from Vienna in the aftermath of the First World War, with its devastation and chronic shortages, to Sweden for nine months as part of the humanitarian programme of the Save the Children organisation. On their return the children were immersed by their parents in the elite humanist culture of *Bildung*.[8] The Gombrich family were moderate in their cultural as well as their political inclinations. In Vienna they were linked socially through Leonie to both Sigmund Freud and Arnold Schoenberg – but Gombrich reports her dislike of both of these men.[9] Gombrich would later comment of his upbringing by his family:

> My development was at least as much influenced by the music in the home of my parents as by any other influence. We were on very intimate terms with a great musician [...] Adolf Busch, the leader of the Busch quarter, a musician dedicated to the classical tradition of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert, and very critical of the modern movement. If people have accused me of being

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[3] E.H. Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest: Conversations on Art and Science with Didier Eribon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), p. 32.
[4] Personal communication, Leonie Gombrich to Matthew Finch, 13 April 2007.
[5] Personal communication, Dorothea McEwan to Matthew Finch, 21 September 2004.
[6] IWM 4521/03/01-03.
[7] E.H. Gombrich, *Norm and Form,* Gombrich on the Renaissance 1 (London: Phaidon, 1993), p. 9.
[8] See 2.2.5 below.
[9] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, pp. 15-16.

> rather distant from the modern movement, it may be that this early imprinting played a part in my life.[10]

Gombrich himself 'did learn to play the cello very badly and never practised enough[.]'[11] His mother was a pianist and music teacher who had studied with Anton Bruckner and heard Brahms and Strauss perform, as well as being acquainted with Gustav Mahler and his social circle. Gombrich's sister Dea was a violinist and close friend of Mahler's daughter Anna.[12] Dea was even invited to give the first ever performance of one of Alban Berg's works, although Gombrich commented that she would always remain 'a little sceptical about the dodecaphonic music which Schoenberg tried to launch.'[13] Gombrich would later marry a pianist, Ilse Heller, who was a pupil of his mother. Gombrich's granddaughter, also named Leonie, would later recall that for Ilse, Leonie was a 'künftige Schwiegermutter, noch bevor sie ihrem späteren Ehemann begegnet war.'[14]

The young Ernst Gombrich was enrolled at the Theresianum *Gymnasium*, or high school, in Vienna, before going on to study art history at the institute directed by Julius von Schlosser (1866-1938) within the University of Vienna. Gombrich's choice of Schlosser over Vienna's other professor of art history, Joseph Strzygowski, had an intellectual significance insofar as Stryzgowski devoted himself to traditions outside of the European and classical heritage, while Schlosser, who had been director of the department of applied art in Vienna's *Kunsthistorisches Museum,* favoured respect for the classical tradition and research focussed on individual objects.[15] Gombrich's studies culminated in doctoral work on the Italian painter and architect Giulio Romano. While

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[10] Ibid., p. 22.
[11] Ibid., p. 23.
[12] Ibid., pp. 15-25.
[13] E.H. Gombrich, 'An Autobiographical Sketch', in *The Essential Gombrich*, ed. by Richard Woodfield (London: Phaidon, 1996), pp. 21-36 (p.23).
[14] Leonie Gombrich, 'Vorwort zur Ausgabe 2004', in Ernst H. Gombrich, *Eine kurze Weltgeschichte für junge Leser* (Cologne: Dumont, 2005), pp. 15-19
[15] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, pp. 37-38.

looking for work after the award of his doctorate, Gombrich was contracted to write the *Weltgeschichte von der Urzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, or 'History of the World from Prehistory to the Present Day' which was published in 1936 – the first of many significant engagements with a wider public beyond the academy, although he had written a short piece on art for *Der Wiener Tag* the previous year.[16]

During his studies in the early 1930s, Gombrich encountered Ernst Kris (1900-1957), a psychoanalyst and art historian then curating the collection of goldsmith-work at the *Kunsthistoriches Museum*. Kris, nine years older than Gombrich, had also been a student of von Schlosser and the two men became close friends and professional associates. Kris employed Gombrich to replace his former assistant, Gombrich's friend Otto Kurz (1908-1975). Kurz had left Vienna to fill a position, by arrangement with Kris, at the *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg* (KBW), a Hamburg-based research establishment founded by the independent scholar Aby Warburg. In the 1930s, Gombrich and Kris worked together on a book which articulated a psychoanalytic understanding of caricature, although this was never published in complete form. In 1933, the KBW was moved to London to escape the rise of the National Socialists in Germany. Kris, who had for a long time tracked ethnonationalist and anti-Semitic developments in Austria, and who served as an agent for the SPSL, arranged to meet the director of the new 'Warburg Institute', Fritz Saxl (1890-1948), in Vienna and recommend Gombrich for a job there.[17] Kris would remain in Vienna until dismissed from his museum post in 1938, first moving to London and then, in 1940, to the USA.[18]

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[16] See J.B. Trapp, *E.H. Gombrich: A Bibliography* (London: Phaidon, 2000), pp. 11-12. As the title suggests, this is the definitive bibliography of Gombrich's published work.

[17] On Kris' worries, see London, Imperial War Museum Oral History Archive (IWM), IWM 4521/03/01-03, interview with Ernst Gombrich [on audio tape]: Ernst Kris 'read the [Nazi newspaper] *Völkische Beobachter* [and...] knew what was coming'; also the discussion of Kris in Feichtinger, pp. 154-155. On Kris' hand in Gombrich's employment by the Warburg Institute, see Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, pp. 46-7 as well as Gombrich's comment in Washington, D.C., Library of Congress (LOC), Manuscript Division, Ernst Kris Papers (EKP), 6, Ernst Gombrich to Ernst Kris, 2 November 1944, that he was 'quite conscious of the fact that any position I have ever had so far (Warburg or BBC) I owed solely to your

In 1936, the year of his marriage to Ilse Heller, Gombrich successfully moved to London and began work at the Warburg Institute. In a 1979 interview he would claim that this was a job opportunity and not a flight into international refuge, and that he had no contact with refugee organisations until the outbreak of war.[19] The archives of the SPSL certainly confirm that Gombrich did not register information with them until the Austrian *Anschluss* of March 1938.[20] Arguably, however, given Kris' part in motivating Gombrich, the young scholar's move could still be considered part of the 'creeping emigration' which had occurred before the rise of the Nazis in Austria.[21]

Gombrich was tasked to assist Gertrud (sometimes 'Gertrude') Bing (1892-1964), herself formerly Aby Warburg's assistant, in editing the posthumous papers, or *Nachlass*, of the Institute's founder. Importantly, this was a post which did not displace any British academic – a key factor for successfully passing the scrutiny of the British immigration regime. Migrants were denied any job which would have taken work away from British subjects, part of a British asylum policy which Waltraud Strickhausen considers to have been built on the pillars of national self-interest, isolationism and the ensuring of peace.[22]

In emigration, Gombrich developed friendships with the economist Friedrich von Hayek and the philosopher Karl Popper. Gombrich and Popper's families had known one another in Vienna, but the two men did not become deeply acquainted until

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active help and intervention' and, in LOC, EKP, 6, Ernst Gombrich to Ernst Kris, 3 January 1945, 'I still remember well how you arranged for me to meet Saxl in some Kaffeehaus'.

[18] Feichtinger, pp. 373-4.

[19] IWM 4521/03/01-03.

[20] University of Oxford, the Bodleian Library, Society for the Protection of Science and Learning Archive (SPSL), 187/3, fol. 214, 'Ernst Gombrich - General Information/Allgemeine Auskunft', March 28, 1938.

[21] On the 'creeping emigration', and the effect of events like the notorious 1934 murder of Otto Schlick on this movement, see Stadler, 'The Emigration and Exile of Austrian Intellectuals'.

[22] See Waltraud Strickhausen, 'Großbritannien', in *Handbuch der Deutschsprachigen Emigration 1933-1945*, pp. 251-270.

both were in London in 1936, from which point they became regular correspondents and lifelong friends. This relationship had benefits as much professional as personal. After Popper was forced to emigrate to New Zealand, it was Gombrich, together with the SPSL-connected Hayek, who was instrumental in arranging the British publication of Popper's *The Open Society*, as well as organising Popper's transfer from New Zealand to Britain at the close of the Second World War.[23]

After the Nazi seizure of power in Austria, Gombrich arranged for his parents to move to the United Kingdom.[24] In *A Lifelong Interest*, he reports how this came to be decided:

> The year after the Anschluss, which happened in March 1938, was very terrible for all of us. My parents had not thought of emigrating. They did not see why they should. My father was a respected lawyer and he had no idea that he was really in danger. But luckily (if I can say that) my mother was called to the Gestapo to be questioned about one of her students. Nothing happened to her, but it made my parents think that it was probably dangerous to stay, and they decided to leave.[25]

Gombrich's sister Lisbeth was also in Vienna at the time of the *Anschluss*. She left the country for the United Kingdom posing as the fiancée of a Swiss family friend. Dea, Gombrich's other sister, fled to Britain from Lausanne, where she had been performing at the time of the *Anschluss*.[26] This was not the only consequence which *Anschluss* would have on the family; Gombrich's children's history of the world was

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[23] As a 'gatekeeper' for the SPSL, assessing representatives of disciplines even beyond his own expertise as an economist, Hayek's actions could determine the fate and future career of a fellow émigré over the longest term. They also shaped the impact successful scholarly emigration might have on the host country. See Feichtinger, pp. 201-202. On the impact Hayek's judgment might have on a career, see Feichtinger, pp. 233-237, which discusses the case of rejected Austrian scholar Alfred Berger-Vösendorf. On Popper, see Hacohen, *Karl Popper*: on the initial friendship with Gombrich, p. 314; on *The Open Society*, pp. 450-462; and on transfer to Britain, pp. 497-499. See also Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, pp. 121-123, and E.H. Gombrich, 'Personal Recollections of the Publication of *The Open Society*', in *Popper's* Open Society *After Fifty Years: The Continuing Relevance of Karl Popper*, ed. by Ian Jarvie and Sandra Pralong (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 17-27.

[24] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 31.

[25] Ibid., pp. 56-7.

[26] Personal communication, Leonie Gombrich to Matthew Finch, 20 April 2007.

banned by the Nazis after they seized power, although this was on the grounds of its perceived pacifism rather than its author's Jewish background.[27] During the period of tension following the Munich crisis of 1938, Gombrich lived with his parents in Paddington, moving with them to Bournemouth on the outbreak of war.[28]

While the declaration of hostilities in 1939 was to see the internment of Austrians as 'enemy aliens',[29] Gombrich avoided this fate by taking on vital war work as a propaganda monitor for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), first at a site near Evesham and later near Reading.[30] It was also around this time that Gombrich wrote a short work on caricature for British publishers Penguin.[31] Although this work was produced by Gombrich alone, such was its dependence on the pre-war research he had done with Ernst Kris that he had it jointly credited to both scholars.[32] While working for the BBC, Gombrich signed another contract for a popular book, this time with émigré publisher Béla Horovitz of the Phaidon Press. This commission was for a history of art on the model of Gombrich's prior children's history. Gombrich's BBC commitments prevented him from writing the book during the war years, but Horovitz kept him under contract.

Gombrich's commitment to a scholarly career cannot be doubted. As he later told a conference of educators in England, he felt that 'the title of an academic is what is known in canon law as a *character indelibilis;* like a priest who has been ordained, he

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[27] Leonie Gombrich, p. 17.
[28] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest,* p. 58.
[29] See Stent, and also *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain,* ed. by David Cesarani and Tony Kushner (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1993).
[30] See Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest,* pp. 57-63 and also Olive Rainier and Vladimir Rubinstein, *Assigned To Listen: The Evesham Experience 1939-43* (London: BBC External Services, 1986), to which Gombrich provided an introduction.
[31] E.H. Gombrich and Ernst Kris, *Caricature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1940).
[32] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest,* p. 51.

cannot wholly divest himself of his role'.[33] However, Gombrich did consider remaining in propaganda work after the end of hostilities in 1945, mainly for reasons of job security as an exile in a foreign land.[34] Ultimately, though, a place was secured for him at the Warburg Institute, and Gombrich's devotion to scholarship was given free reign once again. Gombrich's popular book *The Story of Art* was also completed for Phaidon during this period. A worldwide success and widely translated, it brought Gombrich popular acclaim as well as marking a boom time in his academic career: his three-year Slade Professorship of Fine Art at Oxford began in the year of the book's first publication, 1950, and Gombrich attributed this award to one of the electors having read it.[35] Later in life, Gombrich would even be asked to sign copies of the book after public engagements.[36]

During the postwar period, Gombrich continued to progress up the ranks of the Warburg Institute, passing from Senior Research Fellow to Lecturer, Reader and Special Lecturer before achieving the post of Director and Professor of the Classsical Tradition in 1959. On becoming Director, Gombrich had wryly applied a phrase of Fritz Saxl's critics to himself: 'Jemand muss den Karren schleppen.'[37] If, in this role, Gombrich 'could not so easily start any long-term projects. [...] I could not spare the time. [...] I had very little time',[38] he nonetheless wrote and lectured extensively on the art of the Renaissance, the technical psychology of pictorial representation and the

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[33] E.H Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time: Twentieth-century Issues in Learning and in Art* (London: Phaidon, 1991), p. 25.
[34] See LOC, EKP, 6, Ernst Gombrich to Ernst Kris, 23 September 1945.
[35] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p.65.
[36] Ibid., p. 65.
[37] SPSL, 187/3, fol. 273, Ernst Gombrich to Esther Simpson, 2 June 1959.
[38] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 67. See also Gombrich's 1964 letter to Esther Simpson of the SPSL:

> Needless to say success is a pleasure, though it really has its drawbacks – one of these, and the main[,] being the many calls on one's time. That monster 'administration' gets hold of one and rarely lets go – too many meetings, and too little time.

SPSL, 187/3, fol. 286, Ernst Gombrich to Esther Simpson, 23 October 1964.

history of styles in pictorial art. Gombrich also wrote and published, in 1970, his biography of Aby Warburg, which became a key text in studies of that pioneering art historian.

Retirement finally came to Gombrich in 1976. The event was honoured with an editorial in the *Burlington Magazine*, devoted to Gombrich's 'twofold' achievements at the Warburg Institute. The first of these was considered to be

> the internal management of the Warburg's practical and intellectual affairs in a period of change – even unrest – and increasing financial stringency. Above all, Gombrich has presided over the major change in emphasis in the Warburg's activities from a purely research faculty to an institute also offering higher degree courses[.][39]

In addition to these pragmatic and internal institutional achievements, however, the writer also identifies

> the influence, both internally and externally, in the reputation the Warburg has with the public both here and abroad, of Gombrich's intellectual achievements, his unusual and profoundly stimulating point of view. There must have been many students during the last twenty years who have gone to the Warburg simply to study under him.[40]

In addition to writing 'any number of essays and papers on erudite subjects', Gombrich's fame had also spread beyond the world's campuses, so that his

> name is almost a household word as the author of *The Story of Art* [...] which is still unrivalled for the clarity, perception and common sense with which it covers its notoriously difficult subject.
>
> It is this wide-ranging approach, humble, even reverent in its view of art yet merciless in exposing the prejudice, cant and muddled thinking by which art has too often been surrounded, which has enabled Gombrich to build so many bridges between the 'Fine Arts' and other disciplines, notably psychology.[41]

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[39] Anon., 'Ernst Gombrich and the Warburg Institute: 1936-1976', *Burlington Magazine*, 118 (1976), 463.
[40] Ibid., p. 463.
[41] Ibid., p. 463.

The writer goes on to state that

> Gombrich is, quite simply, our most stimulating guide – not to art history as a cut-and-dried academic subject, nor to the unlocking of riddles – but to that hardest of all themes, our relationship to the past. He is adept not only at tearing away, but also at recognizing in the first place, the many distorting veils that have come between us and the arts of different ages and civilizations. And it need hardly be stressed how important this is at a time when, as Gombrich himself has said, 'our own past is moving away from us at frightening speed.'[42]

Retirement would not check Gombrich's own speed. While tied to an academic post in London, Gombrich and his wife had taken holidays in the Austrian countryside; after retirement, the 'opportunities of worshipping both at the shrines of nature and of art' presented themselves from Japan to North America.[43] This freedom to range across the landscape was intellectual as much as physical: if now there was that 'little time for classical music and such sensible [*sic*] things' which Gombrich had missed as Director, 'the dream of leisure and of the contemplative life [which had kept] receding like the rainbow',[44] he was no less prolific an author. Gombrich made continual media appearances and produced wide-ranging articles, reviews, encyclopaedia entries and speeches. Kokoschka; Schubert; the French Revolution; philosophy and theories of historiography; German literature; all now fell under his self-defined purview, however briefly. Gombrich also maintained an eye on his own posterity, giving interviews on his life to the Imperial War Museum and Didier Eribon, among others, and in 1996 depositing draft materials from his biography of Aby Warburg with the Warburg Institute, out of a desire 'to clarify the genesis of my book which has not always been presented correctly or fairly'.[45]

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[42] Ibid., p. 463.
[43] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, pp. 8-9.
[44] SPSL, 187/3, fol. 286, Ernst Gombrich to SPSL, 23 October 1964.
[45] London, Warburg Institute Archive (WIA), Ernst H. Gombrich, Aby Warburg's Ideas. Draft Material for Warburg Biography (1947, 1948) (AWI), 1, unpaginated loose sheet dated 'March 1996'.

For the historian Jan Gorak, writing in 1991 of canon formation in the modern humanities, Gombrich's industrious and widely known dedication to the cause of the humanist tradition made him a figure who

> might have been created to order by an anti-canonical critic [looking for a foil]. In recent years he has defended the canon on every conceivable occasion, his very presence at conferences and lectures reminding his audience of his eminent and orthodox career. Gombrich shares with Northrop Frye [(1912-1991)...] not just a pre-eminent position in his discipline but an enormous prestige among the general public. If Frye has become one of the most influential figures in modern Canadian culture, Gombrich's seemingly perpetual custodianship of the humanities has reaped an equal share of European offices and honours.[46]

As Gorak hints, Gombrich's list of publications was indeed rivalled only by that of his prizes. These included the Goethe Prize, the Ludwig Wittgenstein Prize, a British knighthood and Order of Merit, the Medal of the Collège de France, the Gold Medal of the City of Vienna and honorary citizenship of the City of Mantova. Gombrich was still working up until his death in November 2001, with the children's *Weltgeschichte* of 1936 finally appearing posthumously in an English translation which Gombrich had partly revised and approved.[47] His obituarists characterized him as, among other things, 'the most eminent art historian of the last half-century, both for specialist scholars and for a wider public',[48] and even 'the most famous art historian in the world'.[49]

In the following sections of this chapter, we will look at the key elements of Gombrich's scholarship in greater depth. We will investigate the pillars of thought on

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[46] Jan Gorak, *The Making of the Modern Canon: Genesis and Crisis of a Literary Idea* (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Athlone, 1991), p. 89.
[47] This publication is discussed at 6.3 below.
[48] Michael Podro, 'Sir Ernst Gombrich', *Guardian*, 5 November 2001, p. 20.
[49] Charles Hope, 'Sir Ernst Gombrich', *Independent*, 6 November 2001, 'The Tuesday Review' section, p. 6.

which his reputation rested and trace, at the chapter's end, some of the foundations on which Gombrich was building his intellectual contributions.

2.2 The scholarship of Ernst Gombrich

2.2.1 Gombrich as theorist of art

Although Gombrich's first work as a scholar was on the art of Renaissance Italy, the engagement with art theory which would form a large part of his scholarly output also began early in his career. In the preface to 1979's *The Sense of Order*, Gombrich would explain how an early encounter with the work of art theorist Alois Riegl (1858-1905), at a seminar run by Julius von Schlosser, would mark his later work:

> [Asked to present a paper on Riegl's *Stilfragen,*] I was soon engrossed in this masterpiece [...] I began to share my teacher's ambivalent fascination with Riegl, whose theories were a favourite topic of discussion among the younger generation of art historians. Understandably therefore my own interests also turned to the art of late antiquity, which Riegl had made his province [...] I mention the personal experiences which led to my involvement with Riegl because I cannot but regret that my continued interest in the theories of one of the most original thinkers of our discipline has earned me the reputation of being hostile to this great man. It is quite true that I have not been able to accept all his findings, but I still believe that one can pay no greater tribute to a scholar or scientist than to take his theories seriously and to examine them with the care they deserve.[50]

[50] E.H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1979), p. viii. On Riegl, see Margaret Iversen, 'Alois Riegl', in *Key Writers on Art: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Chris Murray (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 242-248.

When Gombrich began work with Ernst Kris at Vienna's *Kunsthistorisches Museum*, he would make contact with theories of art which he found more congenial. He became particularly interested in the psychology of perception. Kris was a trained psychoanalyst as well as an art historian and an enthusiastic participant in the circle around Freud.[51] The research Gombrich undertook with Kris formed the basis for Kris' 1952 *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art*, as well as the jointly attributed 1940 work *Caricature*. While Freud's teachings would leave a mark on Gombrich's intellectual output,[52] even at this early stage Gombrich maintained a certain distance from the discipline of psychoanalysis. Although the work on caricature, for example, builds itself around Freud's insights into the joke, Gombrich prefers to use the terms 'psychology' and 'psychologist' where he might have written 'psychoanalysis' or 'psychoanalyst' and Freud's own name, while it does appear in the text, is generally downplayed throughout.[53]

Gombrich's 1930s encounter with psychology appears again in the opening material of *Art and Illusion*, a volume on the theory of pictorial art, where he writes of

> Vienna in 1934 [...] a time when I had some fleeting contact with Egon Brunswik [(1903-1955)], who kindly served as a subject in a series of experiments on the reading of facial expressions in art which I helped to organize under the direction of my late friend Ernst Kris. Above all it was Ernst Kris, the art historian turned psycho-analyst, who, during a friendship lasting more than twenty years, taught me the fruitfulness of a psychological approach. Our joint research into the problem of caricature first brought me up against the question of what is involved in accepting an image as a likeness.[54]

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[51] On Kris, see Feichtinger, pp. 368-374.
[52] See 2.2.4 below.
[53] See Gombrich and Kris, *Caricature*.
[54] E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London and New York: Phaidon, 2002), p. ix. Some of this book's argument is explored further in E.H. Gombrich, *Means and Ends: Reflections on the History of Fresco Painting* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976). On Brunswik, see *The Essential Brunswik: Beginnings, Explications, Applications*, ed. by Kenneth R. Hammond and Thomas R. Stuart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Immediately after this paragraph, Gombrich makes mention of the figure whose strong polemic against Freud's theories probably dissuaded the young art historian from a scholarly career more inflected by psychoanalytic insights. This was Karl Popper:

> It was in the same years, before Hitler's occupation of Vienna, that I was fortunate enough to meet Karl R. Popper, who had just published his book *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* [...] in which he established the priority of the scientific hypothesis over the recording of sense data. Any acquaintance I may have with problems of scientific method and philosophy I owe to his constant friendship. I should be proud if Professor Popper's influence was to be felt everywhere in this book, though naturally he is not responsible for its many shortcomings.[55]

Above all, Popper's influence would make itself felt in Gombrich's tendency to bed his observations and comments on art and art history in the method of the natural sciences or the 'logic of situation', a phrase associated with Popperian philosophy and the economics of Friedrich von Hayek: 'If you assume (which is not always true) that everybody acts in his own interest and acts rationally, then everybody has a choice and can calculate, like a chess player, what possibilities exist in any particular situation.'[56] Although in this quotation Gombrich hedges his assumption with the clause in parentheses, in practice he would often treat historical actors as if they did operate according to this logic.

Gombrich's 1999 book *The Uses of Images* gave a mature articulation of his approach, specifically directed at the field of art history. Gombrich's discussion opens, not with Popper or Hayek, but with Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897), a figure perhaps more congenial for art historians. Gombrich cites Burckhardt's claim that his intellectual legacy was 'Die Kunst nach Aufgaben', and goes on to explain:

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[55] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, p. ix.
[56] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 167.

> What he perceived was that works of art, no less than other goods and services generally, owe their existence to what is now described as 'market forces' – the interaction of demand and supply. For even works which were not commissioned by any patron were mostly produced in the hope of arousing interest and finding a buyer – in other words, they hoped to meet an existing demand.[57]

This theory had been developed by Gombrich over a number of lengthy volumes, starting with the famous *The Story of Art* – a popular text dictated hurriedly, with little research, and intended only

> to show newcomers the lie of the land without confusing them with details; to enable them to bring some intelligible order into the wealth of names, periods and styles which crowd the pages of more ambitious works, and so to equip them for consulting more specialized books.[58]

Despite these self-confessed qualities, which might be thought inauspicious as the cornerstone for a theory of art and artists, *The Story of Art* did serve just such a purpose for Gombrich, built as it is around a famous claim:

> There really is no such thing as Art. There are only artists – men and women, that is, who are favoured with the wonderful gift of balancing shapes and colours till they are 'right', and, rarer still, who possess that integrity of character which never rests content with half-solutions but is ready to forgo all easy effects, all superficial success for the toil and agony of sincere work.[59]

Gombrich's pictorial artists are problem-solvers in the mould of Popper's scientists, reasoning agents who seek to create the illusion of a real visual image and whose choices occasion historical change that is emphatically not teleological 'progress' in the Hegelian sense: 'We must realise that each gain or progress in one direction

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[57] E.H. Gombrich, *The Uses of Images: Studies in the Social Function of Art and Visual Communication* (London: Phaidon, 1999), p. 6.
[58] E.H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 16th edn (London: Phaidon, 1995), p. 7. On the writing of *The Story of Art*, see Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p.64.
[59] Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, p. 596.

entails a loss in another, and that this subjective progress, in spite of its importance, does not correspond to an objective increase in artistic value.'[60]

In making this stand against a kind of Hegelianism, Gombrich is responding to one of the key traditions in German-speaking art-historical thought, that derived from Hegel's *Aesthetics*. Indeed, Michael Podro, writing in *The Critical Historians of Art*, considers, with only minor reservations, that Hegel is 'the first of the critical historians' of art.[61] Podro, who acknowledges that writing about the visual arts was not at the heart of Hegel's wider project, points to Karl Schnaase (1798-1875) as a key figure who 'adapted Hegel's broad teleological scheme of history to the independent development of the visual arts',[62] and also to the ongoing Hegelian influence on other major art-historical scholarship of the German-speaking world, including Riegl's 'conception of a continuous linear development of art history'.[63] Podro delineates two central concepts in Hegel's approach to aesthetics: 'the problem of the role of the art of the past in the mental life of the present, and the problem of showing the way in which art constitutes an exercise of the mind's freedom, its role in the life of Spirit.'[64] Gombrich's comment rejects the notion of a *Geist* or Spirit ever-progressing through history in favour of local historical changes, caused by individual historical actors, which cannot ultimately be assessed as 'progress'.

Gombrich's artists confront the world as a problem to solve, wanting

> to see the world afresh, and to discard all the accepted notions and prejudices about flesh being pink and apples yellow or red. It is not easy to get rid of these

[60] Ibid., p. 9.
[61] Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), p. xxii.
[62] Ibid., p. xxiii.
[63] Ibid., p. 97.
[64] Ibid., p. 18.

> preconceived ideas, but the artists who succeed best in doing so often produce the most exciting works. It is they who teach us to see in nature new beauties of whose existence we have never dreamt.[65]

At the same time they act within the constraints of tradition and the demands of society, particularly of their patrons. Gombrich seeks

> to investigate the limitations in the artist's choice, his need for a vocabulary, and his restricted opportunities for widening the range of representational possibilities. [...] This limitation is not a weakness but rather a source of strength for art. Where everything is possible and nothing unexpected, communication must break down. It is because art operates within a structured style governed by technique and the schemata of tradition that representation could become the instrument not only of information but also of expression.[66]

With its vision of rational artists negotiating between the possibility of seeing the world in undreamt-of ways and the constraints of a historical context, Gombrich's art history is one of styles, of technical developments and innovations emerging from a reasoned 'logic of situation'. Gombrich would not

> deny that historians, like other students of groups, often find attitudes, beliefs, or tastes that are shared by many and might well be described as the mentality or outlook dominant in a class, generation or nation. Nor do I doubt that changes in the intellectual climate and changes in fashion or taste are often symptomatic of social change, or that an investigation of these connections can be worth while.[67]

However, he preferred to subordinate such aspects of history to what Popper would describe as 'something more sensible, such as an analysis of problems arising within a tradition'.[68] In the collected volume *The Heritage of Apelles,* Gombrich's discussion of Alexander the Great's court painter, famed for a talent exceeding any of his peers', applies the 'logic of situation' to pictorial style, explaining that Apelles' story can be understood in terms of technical lighting effects, so that it is Apelles'

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[65] Gombrich, *The Story of Art,* p. 29.
[66] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* pp. 319-320.
[67] Ibid., p. 17.
[68] Popper, cited in Gombrich, *Art and Illusion,* p. 17.

mastery of the highlight which distinguishes him from his contemporaries, advances the tradition of Western art, and earns him his individual renown.[69] Gombrich could also invert this approach, as he does in the same volume's 'As it was in the days of Noe', by deciphering a painting through an analysis of its technical features. This essay uses a reading of the light-effects visible on the outside of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* triptych to argue that the painting represents not the Creation of the World – with the earth surrounded by a crystal sphere – but the flood, with the light-effects indicating the rainbow of the Covenant.[70] Gombrich draws on a range of Christian writings on antediluvian life to support his argument, so that his technical analysis of pictorial representation, his erudition in classical and Renaissance studies, and his ability to read images for their meaning combine to offer a simple and direct conclusion:

> [W]hatever fresh evidence about these and other aspects of Bosch's masterpiece the future may reveal, we can safely discard the awkward title of 'The Garden of Earthly Delights'. Its Christian name is *Sicut erat in Diebus Noe*, or, perhaps more briefly, 'The Lesson of the Flood'.[71]

Even where depiction is not involved, in the case of patterns and decorative art, Gombrich remains fully grounded in a Popperian, psychological approach and a focus on artistic technique. *The Sensory Order* opens rather pointedly with Gombrich's admission that

> I was needled by the assumption that I wished to equate 'art' with 'illusion' though my critics could not possibly know that in point of fact my interest in problems of pure design goes back much further in my life that my interest in the psychology of illusion.[72]

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[69] E.H. Gombrich, 'The Heritage of Apelles' in E.H. Gombrich, *The Heritage of Apelles*, Gombrich on the Renaissance 3 (London: Phaidon, 1993), pp. 3-18.
[70] Gombrich, 'As it was in the Days of Noe', in *The Heritage of Apelles*, pp. 83-90.
[71] Gombrich, *The Heritage of Apelles*, p. 90.
[72] Gombrich, *The Sense of Order*, p. vii.

Gombrich's *The Sensory Order* explains the order of patterns and non-representational designs as deriving from a natural phenomenon, coming 'about where the laws of physics can operate in isolated systems, without mutual disturbance'. Giving the example of ripples from a stone thrown in a pond, Gombrich indicates that these natural orders encounter 'obstacles or other influences, such as a current or a breeze, which will progressively complicate the order till it may elude not only perception but even computation'.[73] The living creature acts 'as an active agent reaching out towards the environment, not blindly and at random, but guided by its inbuilt sense of order'.[74] Zoologist Desmond Morris is cited on simian pattern-making:[75] pointing to this activity, alongside 'the chirping of a cricket or the tail-wagging of a dog', Gombrich argues that the sense of order is not a purely human faculty, although 'it means no derogation from man's unique achievements to look for their roots in our biological inheritance'.[76]

Gombrich's natural science-based approach to patterns and order in non-figurative art has at its heart Popper's 'searchlight theory of the mind', 'a conception that stresses the constant activity of the organism as it searches and scans the environment'.[77] Writing of pictorial representation in *Art and Illusion*, Gombrich again explains that 'In posing the analogy between biological learning and the logic of scientific discovery [...] I rely more explicitly on Popper's methodology than any [other author's.]'[78] Elsewhere, Gombrich had also acknowledged the influence of another émigré scholar on the 'searchlight theory'. In the earlier *Art and Illusion*, he states: 'The

[73] Ibid., p. 5.
[74] Ibid., p. 5.
[75] Ibid., pp. 12-13.
[76] Ibid., p. x.
[77] Ibid., p. 1.
[78] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

theoretical model for this approach, which ultimately goes back to Kant, is worked out most consistently in F.A. Hayek's book *The Sensory Order.*'[79]

The Sense of Order proceeds from its foundations in the natural sciences to the study of cultures: 'Clearly culture can derive analogous advantages from the creation of orders which proved themselves in the process of evolution';[80] 'even the art of drawing [...] is still rooted in the soil of natural organic movement.'[81]

Against the rootedness of Gombrich's own approach in the sciences of physics and animal behaviour, a semiotic approach to art is deprecated and presented in ominous terms:

> [Once] the general science of signs, variously known as Semiotics, Semiology or Semasiology [...] was merely a cloud no larger than a man's hand on the horizon of the humanities. Today the cloud has burst and the mist is rolling in, threatening to blur the outlines of once familiar distinctions.[82]

Gombrich makes only a weak concession to this rival approach, suggesting the visualisation

> of a scale extending from naturalist representation at one pole to 'pure' shapes or colours at the other, with pictorial symbols of increasing abstractness ranged between them. There is no reason to doubt that this scale still has its usefulness even though we must admit that any visual arrangement anywhere along the line can also function as a sign[.][83]

Elsewhere, Gombrich would follow on from these comments by warning that, in mid-twentieth-century aesthetics,

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[79] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, p. 24. See F.A. Hayek, *The Sensory Order: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Theoretical Psychology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952).
[80] Gombrich, *The Sense of Order*, pp. 6-7.
[81] Ibid., p. 14.
[82] Ibid., p. 217.
[83] Ibid., p. 217.

> fresh exploration failed to profit from the lessons of tradition. For there is a curious reversal of emphasis in recent critical writings. It has become an accepted fact that naturalism is a form of convention – indeed, this aspect has been somewhat exaggerated. The language of forms and colours, on the other hand, that explores the inner recesses of the mind has come to be looked upon as being right by nature. Our nature.[84]

Gombrich would suggest that the twentieth-century proliferation of mechanically reproduced images was in part responsible:

> Never before has there been an age like ours when the visual image was so cheap in every sense of the word. We are surrounded and assailed by posters and advertisements, by comics and magazine illustrations. We see aspects of reality represented on the television screen and in the cinema, on postage stamps and on food packages. Painting is taught at school and practised at home as therapy and as a pastime, and many a modest amateur has mastered tricks that would have looked like sheer magic to Giotto. Perhaps even the crude coloured renderings we find on a box of breakfast cereal would have made Giotto's contemporaries gasp. I do not know if there are people who conclude from this that the box is superior to a Giotto. I am not one of them. But I think that the victory and vulgarisation of representational skills create a problem for both the historian and the critic.[85]

Gombrich's difficulties with modern theories of art were paralleled by those he faced in accepting the experimental and avant-garde art of his own lifetime. Provocative or radical movements like Dada would be interpreted as 'the wish of these artists to become as little children and to cock a snook at the solemnity and pomposity of Art with a capital A'.[86] Gombrich explains in the original text of *The Story of Art* that he once

> took it for granted that it was the duty of the critic and of the historian to explain and to justify all artistic experiments in the face of hostile criticism. Today the problem is rather that the shock has worn off and that almost anything

[84] Ibid., p.305
[85] Ibid., p. 7
[86] Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, p.601.

> experimental seems acceptable to the press and the public. If anybody needs a champion today it is the artist who shuns rebellious gesture.[87]

'Nonconformist art', as Gombrich follows Quentin Bell in calling it, is so alien to the émigré art historian at this point that he can only offer a long list of possible explanations for its popularity in the mid-twentieth century, some contradictory – and acknowledged by their author as so. With a tone of gentle distaste, Gombrich suggests that a 'legend has sprung up that all great artists were always rejected and derided in their time and so the public now makes the laudable effort no longer to reject or deride anything'; that the modern business leader and art patron 'must not only go with the times, he [*sic*] must be seen to go with the times, and one way of ensuring this is to decorate his board-room with works of the latest fashion, the more revolutionary the better'; and that simultaneously, 'Art seems the only haven where capriciousness and personal quirks are still permitted and even treasured' so that perhaps 'the artist has not only the right but the duty to abandon all self-control'.[88] Gombrich also blames the rivalry of photography as a method of depiction for forcing art into a less representational direction, and even suggests that official sponsorship of such art may be a Cold War move demonstrating Western 'freedom' in contrast to restricted Soviet aesthetics and, by extension, civic life.

Rallying against surrealism and the like, by the time of *Art and Illusion* Gombrich was working to reconcile such artistic movements with his feeling, expressed in *The Story of Art*, that 'Most people like to see in pictures what they would also like to see in reality. This is quite a natural preference'.[89]

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[87] Ibid., p. 610.
[88] Ibid., pp. 612-614.
[89] Ibid., p. 15.

This feeling would remain present in Gombrich's posthumously published book *The Preference for the Primitive*. There, Gombrich opposed his vision of progressive art, where artists strive for 'mastery' in the form of ever greater technical achievement, with a retrograde tendency to favour allegedly more 'primitive' forms of art, be they from sketchbooks, the cartoonist's pen, the child's crayon, or the art of non-Western cultures. Again, less mimetic or technically sophisticated art was derogated as a lesser stage in the evolution of artistic style or a deliberate provocation of the authorities of art criticism by the avant-garde.[90]

Gombrich, however, did not deal solely in the theory and historic of mimetic art. One section of *Art and Illusion* addresses the question of pictorial depictions whose subject matter does not lie within the 'natural world':

> Can the world of the mind, of the dream, be explored by experiments that result in accepted conventions as was the world of the waking eye? Much of our assessment of twentieth-century art may depend on our answer to his question, for though not all, or even most of it is concerned with synesthesia proper, all or most of it tries to represent the world of the mind where shapes and colours stand for feelings. I believe the analysis of representation may indeed lead us to understand these attempts better and to assess the chances of any new experiments in that direction.[91]

This move is just one of several across the Gombrich *oeuvre* where the art historian seeks to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of his scholarship. In *Symbolic Images*, his collection of essays on iconology, Gombrich highlights the relevance and accessibility of his approach by taking as a case study in the interpretation of artistic meaning the familiar sculpture, popularly thought of as Eros, commemorating

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[90] E.H. Gombrich, *The Preference for the Primitive: Episodes in the History of Western Taste and Art* (London: Phaidon, 2002). For a review of this book which makes a careful reading of Gombrich's argument in order to criticize its ethno- and androcentrism, and its ongoing equation of the exotic 'primitive' with the childlike, see Fay Brauer, 'The Darwin/ist of art history', *Art History*, 26 (2003), 592-597.

[91] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, p. 312.

Lord Shaftesbury at London's Piccadilly Circus.[92] As Gombrich writes even of his Renaissance iconological studies, 'The traditions with which they deal are of more than antiquarian interest. They will affect the way we talk and think about the art of our own time.'[93]

In later editions of *The Story of Art*, Gombrich considers himself to be living in an artistic climate more suited to his intellectual position and his comments on the art of the present day reflect this. The mid-twentieth century had originally left him unwilling to comment on his contemporaries, 'uncomfortable about the idea that one can write the story of art 'up to the present day'. [...] Only a prophet could tell whether these artists will really 'make history', and on the whole critics have proved poor prophets'.[94] Rewriting the book later, however, the art historian finds society in an 'altered mood', where the artist who shuns rebellious gestures no longer requires the defence Gombrich once offered.[95] He positively compares Lucien Freud's 'Two plants' to the work of Dürer, and looks prophetically to David Hockney among others for a moment of 'conciliation between the photographer and the artist [which] will increase in importance in years to come'.[96] Now Gombrich is less uncomfortable about writing the history of the art up to the present day, and more confident in his ability to determine real artistic achievement:

> No critic and no historian can be entirely unbiased, but I think it is wrong to draw the conclusion that artistic values are altogether relative. Granted that we rarely stop to look for the objective merits of works or styles that have failed immediately to appeal to us, this does not prove that our appreciations are

[92] E.H. Gombrich, 'Introduction: Aims and Limits of Iconology', in E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, Gombrich on the Renaissance 2, 3rd edn (London: Phaidon, 1993), pp. 1-25.
[93] Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, p. viii.
[94] Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, p. 600.
[95] Ibid., p. 623.
[96] Ibid., p. 625.

> entirely subjective. I still remain convinced that we can recognize mastery in art, and this recognition has little to do with our personal likes and dislikes.[97]

Gombrich seems to have commented with confidence on contemporary art when he felt that art to be open to his humanist values, but otherwise his writing offers contemporary art a silent, or politely articulated, stigma. As a writer, it can seem, he was at his most comfortable when working on the Renaissance period whose achievements were so esteemed by the humanist culture in which he had been raised.

2.2.2 Gombrich as historian of the Renaissance

Gombrich's theories and approach to art and art history found application not only in his comments on contemporary artworks, but also in his many lectures and writings on the Renaissance, which were collected in four volumes by Phaidon Press under the series title *Gombrich on the Renaissance*. These volumes are vital to understanding Gombrich's work. The *Burlington Magazine* would opine in 1994 that Gombrich's prolific output was owed at least in part to an 'ability to turn the most occasional lecturing or reviewing task into a serious publication, [...] itself an admirable example of creative response to the 'logic of the situation''.[98]

The volumes on the Renaissance, bringing together as they do disparate short pieces under unified theses, give the reader a sense of the more general intellectual moves Gombrich was making, or thought himself to be making, over the course of his career in art history.

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[97] Ibid., p. 626.
[98] Anon., 'The Voice of Reason', *Burlington Magazine*, 136 (1994), 211.

The first volume, *Norm and Form*, appeared in the centenary year of Aby Warburg's birth and 'deal[t] with what may be called the Renaissance climate of opinion about art and with the influence this climate has exerted on both the practice and the criticism of art'.[99] The thesis which unites the collected essays can be seen as an application of the Popperian 'logic of situation' to the cultural history of the Renaissance through the notion of 'climate':

> [C]reativity can only unfold in a certain climate, and [...] this has as much influence on the resulting works of art as a geographical climate has on the shape and character of vegetation. It will be noticed that this metaphor discourages a rigid determinism. The best climate in the world cannot produce a tree in the absence of a healthy seed or sapling. Moreover, a climate that is good for trees, which we like, may also favour the spread of weeds or pests, which we abhor. Any number of weather charts, therefore, will not allow us to predict the flora of a region, let alone the form of individual plants. And yet – to abandon the metaphor – it seems legitimate to study the explicit and implicit critical standards accepted within a given tradition by artists and patrons alike, and to ask what influence these norms may have on the forms produced by masters of varying gifts.[100]

Gombrich's opening essay, 'The Renaissance Conception of Artistic Progress', sets out the growth in importance of the concept of 'progress' during the Renaissance, articulated, above all, by Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574).[101] Within this growing awareness – the logic of this situation – artists were driven to make new aesthetic and technical, new stylistic, choices:

> [Q]uite apart from any psychological effect the idea of progress resulted in what might be called a new institutional framework for art. In the Middle Ages, as social historians always remind us, the artist was really a craftsman, or rather – since this word has acquired a certain Romantic lustre – a tradesman who made paintings and sculptures to order and whose standards were those of his trade-organizations, of the guild. The idea of progress brings in an entirely new

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[99] Gombrich, *Norm and Form*, p. vi.
[100] Ibid., p. vi.
[101] See Sharon Gregory, 'Giorgio Vasari' in *Key Writers on Art: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 76-82.

> element. Now, if I may put it epigrammatically, the artist had not only to think of his commission but of his mission. This mission was to add to the glory of the age through the progress of art.[...] This frame of reference really seems to have created a new context for art.[102]

The historical consciousness imputed here to the Renaissance artist sits happily with Gombrich's own role as custodian of a humanist canon and promoter of Popper's model of intellectual advance, describing as it does, an artist seeing 'himself in the stream of history, deliberately re-evoking and reliving the past and striking out towards a future'.[103] Gombrich goes on to argue that although all kinds of features were introduced into art to display virtuosity and 'progress', demonstrable and reproducible ones – such as the method for drawing a round building in perspective – added to the fund of knowledge and were therefore most valuable: 'In other words, the stronger the admixture of science in art, the more justifiable was the claim to progress.'[104]

This notion leads on to a discussion of the ambivalence of 'progress' which resonates with Gombrich's ambivalent, at best tolerant, view of the experimental and avant-garde in art and politics from the eighteenth century onward:

> [T]he consequences of the Renaissance idea of progress extend far beyond this local disturbance of Mannerism. For it belongs to the class of ideas which act like eating from the tree of knowledge – once you have a notion of good and evil you are for ever cast out of the Paradise of Innocence. We know that the idea of progress had such a fateful effect in the field of politics. As soon as it gained its hold at the time of the French Revolution you could only declare yourself for it, or against it, right-wing or left-wing, and however much we may protest against this one-dimensional arrangement of the *terribles simplificateurs*, we will find it hard to get away from it.[105]

This ambivalence is discussed further in *Norm and Form*'s successor volume, *Symbolic Images*. This book deals with studies in the relatively young and experimental

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[102] Gombrich, *Norm and Form*, pp. 3-4.
[103] Ibid., p. 6.
[104] Ibid., p. 8.
[105] Ibid., p. 9.

art-historical method of iconology, a form of iconographic reading of art which seeks to relate the artwork to its wider historical context.[106] Gombrich approves of the way iconology systematizes the decoding of subject matter in art, but he has reservations and treats the most speculative or avant-garde practitioners of iconology much as he would an experimental artist or a political radical.[107] The *terribles simplificateurs* return in scholars' gowns when Gombrich warns of those who practise the 'Dictionary Fallacy':

> Quite naturally the documentation provided in [iconologists'] texts and footnotes gives chapter and verse for the meaning a given symbol can have – the meaning that supports their interpretation. Here, as with language, the impression has grown up among the unwary that symbols are a kind of code with a one-to-one relationship between sign and significance.[108]

Gombrich writes that even when applying the iconographical method himself, he already felt

> that the relative ease with which Neo-Platonic texts could be used as a key to the mythological paintings of the Renaissance posed a problem of method. How could we tell in any particular case whether we were entitled to use this key, and which of the many possibilities open to us should be chosen? The question became acute when disparate interpretations were offered by several scholars, each supported by a wealth of erudition. The number of fresh connections between pictures and texts which might be acceptable to a court of law as evidence remained regrettably rare. The passage of time and the frequency with which the method was used without proper controls only increased these misgivings.[109]

Gombrich seeks such 'proper controls' by harking back to *Norm and Form*'s 'climates', arguing that among other things *Symbolic Images* demonstrates

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[106] See Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984).
[107] Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, p. 11.
[108] Ibid., p. 12.
[109] Ibid., p. vii. On Gombrich's intervention in the development of iconology and humanist scholars' use of Neo-Platonic thought as a driving force in the debates surrounding the evolution of art history in the mid-twentieth century, see Horst Bredekamp, 'Götterdämmerung des Neuplatonismus', in *Die Lesbarkeit der Kunst: Zur Geistes-Gegenwart der Ikonologie*, ed. by Andreas Beyer, (Berlin:Wagenbach, 1992), pp. 75-83.

> that the opposition which iconology has frequently encountered for its alleged concentration on intellectual rather than formal aspects of art rests on a misunderstanding. We cannot write the history of art without taking account of the changing functions assigned to the visual image in different societies and different cultures.[110]

Gombrich uses the idea of genre as a tool for iconographical interpretation which negotiates between the extremes of an overly simplistic correspondence of word and image and an anything-goes linking of the most esoteric visual and written material:

> Without the existence of such genres in the tradition of Western art the task of the iconologist would indeed be desperate. If any image of the Renaissance could illustrate any text whatsoever, if a beautiful woman holding a child could not be presumed to represent the Virgin and the Christchild, but might illustrate any novel or story in which a child is born, or indeed any textbook about child-rearing, pictures could never be interpreted. It is because there are genres such as altar paintings, and even repertoires such as legends, mythologies, or allegorical compositions, that the identification of subject matters is at all possible.[111]

These genres are not abstract but empirically real for Gombrich: he looks at the process by which Renaissance patrons gave artists the 'programme' of subjects to be represented,

> based on certain conventions, conventions closely rooted in the respect of the Renaissance for the canonic texts of religion and of antiquity. It is from a knowledge of these texts and a knowledge of the picture that the iconologist proceeds to build a bridge from both sides to close the gap between the image and the subject matter. Interpretation becomes reconstruction of a lost piece of evidence.[112]

Interpretation here also becomes reconcilable with the 'logic of situation'. Original intention – the intention of a historical agent working within the 'logic of situation' – remains the key to Gombrich's approach to art interpretation. Although 'to

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[110] Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, p. viii.
[111] Ibid., p. 5.
[112] Ibid., p. 6.

investigate and spell out [all of an artwork's] implications would again lead us to an infinite regress',[113] and it is

> characteristic of representation that the interpretation can never be carried beyond a certain level of generality [...] I would contend that neither the Courts of Law nor the Courts of Criticism could continue to function if we really let go of the notion of an intended meaning.[114]

In this rather pragmatic iconology, it is not only artists and patrons following a logic of situation, but also those who operate the 'Courts of Criticism'. In *Symbolic Images,* the empiricist, Popperian scientist is conjured once more as a model for the art historian through the humble analogy of the reader of cookery books:

> Admittedly it is more thrilling to read or write detective stories than to read cookery books, but it is the cookery book that tells us how meals are conventionally composed and, *mutatis mutandis*, whether the sweet can ever be expected to be served before the soup. We cannot exclude a capricious feast which reversed all the orders and accounts for the riddle we were trying to solve. But if we postulate such a rare event, we and our reader should know what we are doing [...] However daring we may be in our conjectures – and who would want to restrain the bold? – no such conjectures should ever be used as a stepping stone for yet another, still bolder hypothesis. We should always ask the iconologist to return to base from every one of his [*sic*] individual flights, and to tell us whether programmes of the kind he has enjoyed reconstructing can be documented from primary sources or only from the works of his fellow iconologists.[115]

Symbolic Images' attempt at an intervention in the postwar development of iconology was followed by *The Heritage of Apelles,*[116] which again saw an explicit move to yoke together Gombrich's divergent scholarly interests:

> In *Art and Illusion* [...] I attempted to probe the process the Greeks called *mimesis*, the creation of a faithful representation. This line of research led me inevitably to the psychology of vision. I found the results and debates of

[113] Ibid., p. 4.
[114] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[115] Ibid., p. 21.
[116] See 2.2.1 above.

> contemporary perceptual psychology quite absorbing, but I was sometimes plagued by the worry whether I was not playing truant from my assignment at the Warburg Institute, where I hold the title of a Professor of the History of the Classical Tradition. It was with relief, therefore, that I discovered that these preoccupations also helped me to see the classical tradition in a fresh light and to pose questions which more specialized art historians had failed to ask.[117]

The final volume in the series *Gombrich on the Renaissance*, which promised to shed *New Light on Old Masters*, again applies Gombrich's own distinctive and pragmatic approach to some of the most famous names of the Renaissance:

> [A]rt-historical research would cease to make sense if it could not also throw new light on familiar subjects. That light, of course, must come from a fresh interpretation of the evidence, often from a new reading of texts and documents which had been previously neglected or misunderstood.[118]

Amongst the collected chapters, a study of Raphael brings the insights of *Art and Illusion* to bear on 'Ideal and Type in Italian Renaissance Painting'; the logic of Giulio Romano's situation as servant to an Italian court is investigated; iconology *à la Gombrich* is applied to the relationship between Romano's Palazzo del Té and the Renaissance appropriation of classical theories of oratory; and in two essays, Leonardo da Vinci is presented as an almost idealized Gombrichian figure whose technical advances stemmed from an 'undoubted wish to reproduce natural appearances with scientific accuracy' while negotiating with the traditional wisdom of art in his time,[119] and a thinker whose most trivial and jocular riddles in fact reflect a desire to dispel magic with *scientia* by articulating 'the need for rational man to rid himself of the mental habits due to ordinary language'.[120]

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[117] Gombrich, *The Heritage of Apelles*, p. vii.
[118] E.H. Gombrich, *New Light on Old Masters*, Gombrich on the Renaissance 4 (London: Phaidon, 1993), p.7.
[119] Ibid., p. 34.
[120] Ibid., p.88.

2.2.3 Gombrich's vision of cultural history

2.2.3.1 *In Search of Cultural History*

Although Gombrich had a stated antipathy to abstract historiographical theorising and his scholarship was broadly and consistently characterized by the application of his Popperian approach to the psychology of art and Renaissance art history, he did also hold a theory of cultural history. As a long-term member and even Director of the Warburg Institute, formerly a *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek,* he had a certain commitment to the notion of cultural history which significantly complicates any understanding of Gombrich as 'the Popperian art historian'. As Gombrich said in a 1966 lecture commemorating Aby Warburg for a Hamburg audience, a commitment to cultural values was as important as one to scientific method in producing valid humanities scholarship: 'Wir Geisteswissenschaftler laufen Gefahr, aus Respekt vor den Naturwissenschaften in den Relativismus einer rein beschreibenden Neutralität zu verfallen, die unsere ganze Tätigkeit fragwürdig macht.'[121]

Gombrich's vision of cultural history was articulated in passing across many of his works, but a 1969 publication, *In Search of Cultural History,* provides a thorough

[121] Ernst H. Gombrich, 'Festvortrag' in Karl-Heine Schäfer, Ernst H. Gombrich, Carl Georg Heise, *Aby Warburg: Zum Gedächtnis* (Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 1966), pp. 15-36 (p. 36).

and coherently argued account and is therefore an excellent starting point for an exploration of that vision.[122]

Gombrich opens his discussion by examining the word 'culture' itself, from an English speaker's perspective. After recounting a London taxi journey in which his driver expressed a hatred for the term, Gombrich expresses an understanding that the word 'culture'

> had become tainted for him, as for many other sensitive people, by the highmindedness of Matthew Arnold with his eagerness to spread 'sweetness and light' among the benighted, and by the lowmindedness of German propaganda during the First World War which invented a contrast between German *Kultur*, naturally a good thing, profound and strong, and Western civilization, a bad thing, a mere shallow addiction to gadgetry and materialism.[123]

Gombrich also notes, and is disparaging of, a 'sterilized meaning' derived from sociology and anthropology, as in 'working-class culture': 'These are purely descriptive terms, stripped, it is often claimed, of any so-called 'value judgement'.'[124]

Against these meanings, Gombrich offers an understanding explicitly presented as commonsensical, and one which has interesting resonances with the life of an émigré:

> At least everybody knows [what 'culture' means] who has ever travelled from one country to another, or even moved from one social circle to another, and has experienced what it means to be confronted by different ways of life, different systems of reference, different scales of value – in short different cultures.[125]

Gombrich later re-emphasizes this point, writing that

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[122] For a cultural historian's response to Gombrich's comments in this work, see Claude N. Pavur, 'Restoring Cultural History: Beyond Gombrich', *Clio*, 20 (1991), 157-167.
[123] E.H. Gombrich, *In Search of Cultural History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 2.
[124] Ibid., p. 2.
[125] Ibid., p. 2.

> the cultural historian does not differ all that much from his predecessor, the traveller to foreign lands. Not the professional traveller who is only interested in one particular errand, be it the exploration of a country's kinship system or its hydro-electric schemes, but the broadminded traveller who wants to understand the culture of the country in which he finds himself.[126]

Contrasts between cultures can be identified positively or negatively – to criticize either the foreign or the home culture. And, in Gombrich's analysis, 'travellers to foreign lands' are 'joined by travellers in time, by historians' examining past cultures.[127]

Gombrich ventures back in time himself to examine the concept of 'progress' from the work of Giorgio Vasari to the present day. The thought of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) comes in for special attention and criticism:

> Hegel translated [the Christian] ascent [of creation towards the divine] into the terms of logical categories and thus turned the cosmic process into the progression of the divine spirit thinking itself, impelled by the need of resolving contradictions to move to a higher and higher plane of articulation. Human history, the rise of civilization, is part of this progress, indeed it repeats its essential and inevitable dialectical steps as an ascent through the logical categories till the divine at last comes to self-awareness in the mind of Herr Professor Hegel.[128]

The critic in the Hegelian system is presented as kin to the incontinent avant-garde artist of *The Story of Art*, who 'has not only the right but the duty to abandon all self-control. If the resulting outbursts are not pretty to contemplate, this is because our age is not pretty either'.[129] An Hegelian 'can watch the signs of the times, he has no right to judge them. Every person can hope to be the mouthpiece, indeed almost the

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[126] Ibid., p. 42.
[127] Ibid., p. 3.
[128] Ibid., p. 7. On Hegel's art history, see Podro, *The Critical Historians*.
[129] Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, p. 614.

incarnation, of the spirit'.[130] Where Hegel sees scholars working on his model as being like astronomers working out cosmic laws from geometry, for Gombrich the Hegelian is a practitioner of exegetics: 'Just as the ingenuities of the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures often compel admiration, so does Hegel's skill in representing [for example] every aspect of ancient Egyptian civilization in the light of [a] preconceived notion[.]'[131]

Significantly, and dangerously from Gombrich's perspective,

> No type of historian has a greater stake in this approach than the historian of art. Indeed it might be claimed that a history, as distinct from a critical evaluation, of the art of the past only became possible in the light of this interpretation. For Vasari as for [Johann Joachim] Winckelmann [(1717-1768)], art had indeed responded to favourable conditions but declined when conditions altered. Now there was no decline, only the logical progression of the *Zeitgeist* which had brought about changes in the monuments of the past. The changing styles of art thus became the index of the changing spirit.[132]

Gombrich finds it almost impossible to escape objectionable Hegelian assumptions in cultural history. He finds them in Marxist analyses; in the work of 'father of cultural history' Jacob Burckhardt; he even finds them in the alternative tradition of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) and Karl Lamprecht (1856-1915) which sought 'the essence not in the material conditions but in the mentality of an age'.[133] He writes:

> [O]bviously there is something in the Hegelian intuition that nothing in life is ever isolated, that any event and any creation of a period is connected by a thousand threads with the culture in which it is embedded. [...] But is the acknowledgement of this link tantamount to a concession that the Hegelian

[130] Gombrich, *In Search of Cultural History*, p. 7.
[131] Ibid., p. 11.
[132] Ibid., p. 13.
[133] Ibid., p. 26. On Burckhardt, see Richard Sigurdson, *Jacob Burckhardt's Social and Political Thought* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2004). On Dilthey, see Jacob Owensby, *Dilthey and the Narrative of History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). On Lamprecht, see Kathryn Brush, 'The Cultural Historian Karl Lamprecht: Practitioner and Progenitor of Art History', *Central European History*, 26 (1993), 139-164.

> approach is right after all? I do not think so. It is one thing to see the interconnectedness of things, another to postulate that all aspects of a culture can be traced back to one key cause of which they are the manifestations.[134]

Gombrich uses the notions of technical advance and the 'logic of situation' to salvage, from his perspective, the art-historical – and wider cultural-historical – project:

> Just as Hegel treated the invention of gunpowder as a necessary expression of the advancing spirit, [...it is said that] the sophisticated historian should treat the invention of oil painting (or what was described as such) as a portent of the times. Why should we not find a simpler explanation in the fact that those who had gunpowder could defeat those who fought with bows and arrows or that those who adopted the van Eyck technique could render light and sparkle better than those who painted in tempera?[135]

To warring spirits of the age or the nation, Gombrich prefers the study of 'movements', with manifestos, uniforms, explicitly held common views:

> It is possible to write the history of such a movement, to speculate about its beginnings and about the reasons for its success or failure. It is equally necessary then to ask how firmly the style and the allegiance it once expressed remained correlated[.][136]

Gombrich's movements are formed out of individuals making choices:

> The distinction at which I am aiming here is that between movements and periods. Hegel saw all periods as movements since they were embodiments of the moving spirit. This spirit, as Hegel taught, manifested itself in a collective, the supra-individual entities of nations or periods. Since the individual, in his view, could only be thought of as part of such a collective it was quite consistent for Hegelians to assume that 'man' underwent profound changes in the course of history.[137]

Gombrich here shows none of the flexibility of attitude towards the interpretation of Hegel which Michael Podro would later claim was necessary for the art

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[134] Gombrich, *In Search of Cultural History*, p. 30.
[135] Ibid., p. 31.
[136] Ibid., p. 34.
[137] Ibid., pp. 35-6.

historian: 'With Hegel one needs to remain fairly flexible in one's attitude, sometimes following his theory as if it were a fairy story – the mind and its adventures in the world of raw matter – but then the images resolve themselves into sharply focused thought.'[138] However, this may be because Gombrich's comments are directed as much against actual regimes which sought to remould the individual as against Hegel's theoretical formulations. Gombrich makes his criticism of Hegelian philosophy with reference to political philosophies which had drastically affected the course of his own life: 'The same extremism was of course reflected in the claims of the totalitarian philosophies which stemmed from Hegel to create a new 'man', be it of a Soviet or of a National Socialist variety.'[139]

Gombrich explains, 'It is this belief in the existence of an independent supra-individual collective spirit which seems to me to have blocked the emergence of a true cultural history.'[140] Nonetheless, he finds it possible to

> hope and believe cultural history will make progress if it also fixes its attention firmly on the individual human being. Movements, as distinct from periods, are started by people. Some of them are abortive, others catch on. Each movement in its turn has a core of dedicated souls, a crowd of hangers-on, not to forget a lunatic fringe. There is a whole spectrum of attitudes and degrees of conversion. Even within the individual there may be various levels of conviction, various conscious and unconscious fluctuations in loyalty.[141]

This restored emphasis on the complexity and agency of the individual historical actor will, Gombrich hopes, make the cultural historian

> a little wary of the claims of cultural psychology. He will not deny that the success of certain styles may be symptomatic of changing attitudes, but he will

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[138] Podro, *The Critical Historians*, p. 17.
[139] Gombrich, *In Search of Cultural History*, p. 36.
[140] Ibid., p. 36.
[141] Ibid., p. 37.

> resist the temptation to use changing styles and changing fashions as indicators of profound psychological changes.[142]

Gombrich distinguishes his cultural historian from the social historian, emphasising the study and interpretation of words, images, and other cultural artefacts rather than the statistics or demography of past societies. Gombrich acknowledges that this new cultural historian is left in a woeful position, recognising that no element of a culture can be understood in isolation, but also that Hegelian totalities are unacceptable. There is, however, a solution, combining Gombrich's 'common sense' notion of culture as that which the traveller experiences abroad and a Popperian approach to research as the posing of reasoned questions from within a pre-existing tradition:

> What Popper has stressed for the scientist also applies to the scholar. No cultural historian ever starts from scratch. The traditions of his own culture, the bias of his teacher, the questions of the moment can all stimulate his curiosity and direct his questionings. He may want to continue some existing lines of research or to challenge their result [...] Whether we know it or not, we always approach the past with some preconceived ideas, with a rudimentary theory we wish to test. [...] Our reactions and observations will always be dependent on the initial assumptions with which we approach a foreign civilization. The questions we may wish to ask are therefore in no way random; they are related to a whole body of beliefs we wish to reinforce or to challenge.[143]

Even as he invokes Popper, however, Gombrich makes an all-important distinction between the Popperian scientist and the cultural historian. The scientist 'must always work on the frontiers of knowledge [...within] a small sector in which hypotheses can be tested and revised by means of experiments which may be costly and time-consuming'.[144] In contrast,

> Humanistic education aims first and foremost at knowledge, that knowledge that used to be called 'culture'. In the past this culture was largely transmitted and absorbed in the home or on travels. The universities did not concern themselves

[142] Ibid., p. 37.
[143] Ibid., pp. 42-3.
[144] Ibid., p. 47.

> with such subjects as history or literature, art or music. Their aim was mainly vocational, and even a training in the Classics, though valued by society, had its vocational reasons. Nobody thought that it was the purpose of a university education to tell students about Shakespeare or Dickens, Michelangelo or Bach. These were things the 'cultured' person knew. They were neither fit objects for examinations nor for research. I happen to have some sympathy for this old-fashioned approach, for I think that the humanist really differs from the scientist in his relative valuation of knowledge and research. It is more relevant to know Shakespeare, or Michelangelo than to 'do research' about them.[145]

Gombrich acknowledges that 'There may be a science of culture, but this belongs to anthropology and sociology':

> The cultural historian wants to be a scholar, not a scientist. He wants to give his students and his readers access to the creations of other minds; research, here, is incidental. Not that it is never necessary. We may suspect current interpretations of Shakespeare or the way Bach is performed and want to get at the truth of the matter. But in all this research the cultural historian really aims at serving culture rather than at feeding the academic industry.[146]

Gombrich writes ambivalently of this 'academic industry', claiming that the demands of research leave 'the unread masterpieces of the past look[ing] at us reproachfully from the shelves'.[147] Nonetheless,

> For good or ill the universities have taken over from the home much of the function of transmitting the values of our civilization. [...] We surely want these values to be probed and scrutinized, but to do so effectively their critics must know them. [...] The study of culture is largely the study of continuities, and it is this sense of continuity rather than of uncritical acceptance we hope to impart to our students. We want them to acquire a habit of mind that looks for these continuities not only within the confines of their special field, but in all the manifestations of culture that surround them.[148]

Indeed, it is these continuities which Gombrich is seeking to protect from the threats presented by twentieth-century life, continuities which seemed available to Gombrich's predecessors even up to the nineteenth century, but not to his peers:

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[145] Ibid., p. 47.
[146] Ibid., p. 48.
[147] Ibid., p. 48.
[148] Ibid., pp. 48-9.

> The Victorian editor of Cicero's *Letters to Atticus* did not have to subscribe to Hegelian tenets to sketch in what was sometimes called the 'cultural background' in his introduction and notes. He had that unselfconscious sense of continuity with the past that allowed him to take for granted what was in need of explanation, and what was obvious to his readers.[149]

Gombrich contrasts this unselfconscious, taken-for-granted erudition with a vision of 1969 in which

> Our own past is moving away from us at frightening speed, and if we want to keep open the lines of communication which permit us to understand the greatest creations of mankind we must study and teach the history of culture more deeply and more intensely than was necessary a generation ago, when many more of such resonances were still to be expected as a matter of course. If cultural history did not exist, it would have to be invented now.[150]

2.2.3.2 Developments in Gombrich's cultural history after 1969

If *In Search of Cultural History* set out Gombrich's dream of a future cultural history in 1969, the 1994 *Burlington Magazine* editorial on his career would chart that dream's imperfect realisation in British academia:

> For Gombrich the Scylla and Charybdis of art history are determinist historicism and cultural relativism, the twin offspring of the Hegelian view of history. His warnings were at first readily taken up in Britain, for they apparently chimed in with native traditions of empiricism and positivism. Gombrich's half-joking preference for nominalism, and his insistence on evidence to support argument were enthusiastically adopted by a new generation of archivally based art historians researching the context of past art, its 'ecological niche', in Gombrich's phrase.[151]

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[149] Ibid., p. 39.
[150] Ibid., p. 45.
[151] Anon., 'The Voice of Reason', p. 211.

The editorial goes on to suggest that British art history has ultimately failed to meet Gombrich's requirements, being keener to appropriate theoretical approaches from across disciplines than follow the Popperian approach of testing hypotheses against evidence and therefore 'rush[ing] once more into the Hegelian pit' of cultural determinism and relativism.[152]

As early as four years after *In Search of Cultural History* was published, Gombrich was already beginning to intervene in order to delimit and control the scope of the growing 'cultural history' which the 1994 editorial depicts as having disappointed him. In 1973 a discussion between Gombrich and historian Peter Burke on the topic of cultural history was broadcast on the BBC, and later published in *The Listener*. In it, Gombrich builds on his notion of a restrained cultural sensibility, not wholly 'scientific', as the tool of a good historian, while also strongly criticising the turn, especially towards anthropology, that cultural history was making.

Burke and Gombrich's conversation largely deals with the issues of broad-scale cultural history – what Burke refers to as the 'connections between art and literature and religion in a given society [...] a model, if you like, of mutual interaction between painters, poets and priests'.[153] As one might expect, Gombrich's criticism of broad cultural analysis – in this case, on the part of cultural anthropologists – restates his long-standing objection to 'Hegelianism and holism. In other words, I believe that the patterns [such anthropological approaches] describe for us are also partly a product of their own abstraction'[154].

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[152] Ibid., p. 211.
[153] Peter Burke and E.H. Gombrich, 'Ernst Gombrich discusses the concept of cultural history with Peter Burke', *Listener*, 27 December 1973, pp. 881-883 (p. 881).
[154] Ibid., p. 882.

Gombrich is particularly chary of studies dealing with the 'feel' of places and periods: 'Mentality,' he says, '[...] seems to me a very elusive thing.'[155] He extends the question from suprapersonal *mentalité* to the level of individuals, discussing social roles and the reading of facial expression. The problem confronting the historian is the same at any level of scale:

> [H]istory is like a Swiss cheese, full of holes. There are tremendous gaps in our knowledge, and the problem of how to fill these gaps will never be answered completely satisfactorily [...] In human situations [...] we must rely on the instrument we have, which is our human sensibility.[156]

In typically hedged language, deceptively casual but difficult to penetrate, Gombrich defends this 'sensibility' while trying to maintain a distinction from the preconceptions of the allegedly 'Hegelian' cultural anthropologist:

> You get the feel of a period by reading a lot. You don't know everything that happened in the past, but you develop a sensitivity for what might not have happened, for what is impossible within that period. This intuition may be wrong. You may find when you turn the next page that what you thought was impossible in the 15th century did happen. But you have certain reasons for your confidence.[157]

These 'certain reasons', going unglossed, remain mysterious and intuitive; they belong to that sense of continuity and cultural background which Gombrich described in the conclusion to his 1969 text. The distinguishing characteristic of this intuition or sensibility appears to be moderation and restraint. Such restraint is necessary, argues Gombrich, in the face of the 'great host of variables interacting' at any moment in human history, such variables scuppering 'unitary patterns, which explain everything through race or through society, through the processes of production, or through climate

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[155] Ibid., p. 882.
[156] Ibid., p. 882.
[157] Ibid., p. 882.

perhaps'.[158] When Burke argues that 'we need a model for the interaction. We can't do without one, even though we may be condemned simply to invent one', Gombrich responds by introducing the notion of turbulence as a zone where humanist sensitivity and detachment can no longer reach worthwhile conclusions:

> In hydrodynamics there comes a state called turbulence, when no engineer would wish to predict where the different eddies will go. I learnt that when I worked on Leonardo's studies of water movements. You cannot map out in advance how exactly the currents of water in a narrow will flow. And the same is probably true of the movements of the mind.[159]

Even though the modelling of physical turbulence involves predicting the future, Gombrich's historiographical turbulence impedes the modelling, analysis and explanation – the 'prediction', as it were – of the past. It is a vital development in Gombrich's theory of cultural history as it serves to identify all those representations of the past which lie beyond the realm of the legitimate, humanist sensibility. Having set out the past as a zone open to humanist history-writing, but bordered by impenetrable 'turbulence', Gombrich would respond fiercely to attempts to enter spaces unknowable for historical scholarship as he envisioned it. Among the occasional transgressors of the bounds of such scholarship were the practitioners of psychoanalysis, a discipline at once humanist and 'turbulent' to which Gombrich held a most ambivalent relationship.

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[158] Ibid., p. 883.
[159] Ibid., p. 883.

2.2.4 Gombrich and psychoanalysis

As previously stated, Gombrich came into contact with psychoanalytic thought early in his career via his friend, mentor and collaborator Ernst Kris. Mention of psychoanalysis, with varying degrees of endorsement and enthusiasm, recurs throughout Gombrich's scholarly career. At times, Gombrich would offer an almost dismissive understanding of psychoanalysis as one of

> Many competing overriding theories [...] – Marxism, Racialism [...], Structuralism and any other global theory claiming to explain the whole of human behaviour and of history. These claims often sound attractive: they operate with selected examples and promise the practitioner a safe method of dealing with his material, but a moment of reflection should convince him that their promise is bound to be spurious. It is bound to be spurious because the explanations we seek will always depend on our interest and on the question we ask.[160]

Gombrich's close association with Karl Popper, so evident in the above quotation, seems to have largely obscured his contact with psychoanalysis; it gathers no mention in any of his major British obituaries and in a 1995 commentary on Aby Warburg, Michael P. Steinberg took particular issue with what he diagnosed as Gombrich's 'Popperian positivism and [...] his antipathy to psychoanalytic constructs'.[161] However, the intellectual encounter with Freud made a lasting and significant impact on Gombrich's work.

Gombrich's original collaboration with Kris in the early 1930s had involved a study of caricature built around Freud's psychoanalytic insight into jokes. In *Art and*

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[160] Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, p. 66.
[161] Michael P. Steinberg, 'Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture: A Reading', in Aby M. Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, trans. by Michael P. Steinberg (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1995), pp. 59-109 (p. 68).

Illusion, Gombrich directs the reader to Kris' 1952 *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* for further reading on this project, despite having published his own short edition, attributed jointly to himself and Kris, in wartime Britain. Although the psychoanalytic elements of the English-language 1940 publication on caricature were toned down,[162] Gombrich was still happy to state: 'What Freud has taught us about Wit and its relation to the unconscious applies no less to the graphic expression of Wit.'[163] In 1953, Gombrich would also give the Ernest Jones memorial lecture in London. Gombrich modestly declared this to be 'Of course, really an Ernest [*sic*] Kris lecture',[164] but Kris himself considered it 'the most scintillating, most effective and most brilliant piece of yours which I have ever read. It certainly is the best lecture delivered in any psychoanalytic society during the last decade'.[165]

The lecture, published as 'Psycho-Analysis and the History of Art' in *Meditations on a Hobby Horse,*[166] is typical of Gombrich's work in that it sets out a general position, here on psychoanalysis and its relation to art history, to which he held with remarkable continence and confidence throughout his subsequent career.

Gombrich's argument within the lecture seeks to assimilate psychoanalytically inclined art history to his own art history of technical evolution. To this end, he opens with a quote from Ernest Jones (1879-1958) himself in which Jones, writing of the development of religion and science, suggests that the progress of the human mind consists of two processes – the move from primitive to complex ideas and the unmasking of previous truths as mere aspects or representations of reality. Gombrich

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[162] See 2.2.1. above.
[163] Gombrich and Kris, p. 26.
[164] LOC, EKP, 6, Ernst Gombrich to Ernst Kris, 24 November 1953.
[165] LOC, EKP, 6, Ernst Kris to Ernst Gombrich, 19 January 1954.
[166] E.H. Gombrich, *Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art*, 2nd edn (London and New York: Phaidon, 1971), pp. 30-44.

jokingly suggests that had Jones included art alongside religion and science, he would have rendered *The Story of Art* irrelevant by condensing its 'mere 450 pages' to a paragraph of his own.[167]

Gombrich suggests that Jones omitted art from his analysis when writing in 1916 because the psychoanalysis of that time studied art as a mode of expression rather than representation, and attended more to the inner significance of artwork than Gombrich's own terrain of 'the historical progress of modes of representation'.[168] Gombrich argues,

> In most psycho-analytic discussions of art the analogy between the work of art and the dream stands in the foreground of interest [...but] if you follow me in your mind on a lightning excursion to the National Gallery, with its Madonnas and landscapes, still lifes and portraits, you will realize that the traditional conventional elements often outweigh the personal ones in many, even of the great masterpieces of the past.[169]

Gombrich emphasizes conventionality and the institutional aspects of art over the personal and deep psychological aspects relating to the artist. He indicates Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* and wonders whether its significance for the artist as an image of a brothel local to his house is at all relevant to understanding the painting as 'the starting-point of Cubism': 'It acquired this meaning within a different context: the context of the institution we call art.'[170] Gombrich goes on to argue,

> The fact [...] that all eighteenth-century landscapes or twentieth-century dream-paintings have enough in common to allow us art historians to tell, on the whole, where and when they were made, is not due to some mysterious fluid or collective spirit that governs the modes of perception or the images of dreams

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[167] Ibid., p. 30.
[168] Ibid., p. 30.
[169] Ibid., p. 31.
[170] Ibid., p. 33.

> but rather to the observable fact that symbols developed from a common stock will tend to have a certain family likeness.[171]

Gombrich is here not only taking issue with Hegelian 'collective spirits' but also with psychoanalysis' own tendency to uncover hidden personal meanings beyond that domain of reason which was so important to Gombrich's humanism. Gombrich argues that

> try as we may, we historians just cannot raise the dead and put them on your couch [...] Such attempts as have been made, therefore to tiptoe across the chasm of centuries on a fragile rope made of stray information can never be more than a *jeu d'esprit*[.][172]

Indeed, Gombrich answers 'the question whether it really matters all that much if we know what the work of art meant to the artist' thus:

> It clearly matters on one assumption and on one assumption only: that this private, personal, psychological meaning of the picture is alone the real, the true meaning – the meaning, therefore which it conveys if not to the conscious at least to the unconscious mind of the beholder[.][173]

Gombrich insists that his readership, or the audience of 1953, accept that private and personal meanings of art for the artist either mean everything or nothing, implicitly refusing the possibility of overdetermined or overlapping meanings in art. This coincides with Gombrich's dislike of semiotic approaches to art and leaves the intellectual arena open for him to present a more modestly psychoanalytic art history, resonant with his later work *The Preference for the Primitive*, which charts a 'mature' negotiation between a primitivist impulse for the 'mushy' or sentimental and an overly sophisticated and abstract, 'gritty' modern art.[174] The extreme modesty to which

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[171] Ibid., p. 34.
[172] Ibid., p. 31.
[173] Ibid., p. 31.
[174] Ibid., p. 43.

Gombrich reduces psychoanalytic art history is at its clearest in the concluding paragraph of the lecture, which extols the virtue of the Ego in canalising and configuring impulses from the Id, thus achieving

> the certainty that the resolution of conflict, the achievement of freedom without threat to our inner security, is not wholly beyond the grasp of the aspiring human mind. But, when I come to think of it, I'd like to shirk the question after all, whether [a] picture on [a] screen holds all the elements in such a miraculous and reassuring balance. For to answer this question – let it be said in all humility – Psycho-analysis is not really competent; but neither is the History of Art.[175]

However much it deprives psychoanalysis of its ability to probe for hidden meanings, and however much it seeks to make psychoanalytic art history a mere adjunct to Gombrich's own art history of stylistic evolution, this lecture clearly represents something far from the outright rejection of psychoanalysis, either as scholarly tool or academic institution, which would later be ascribed to Gombrich. Kris' influence is highly significant in this regard; the art historian turned analyst seems to have combined Gombrich's cardinal virtues of humanist scholarship with psychoanalytic insight, allowing Gombrich to interpret psychoanalysis favourably, if rather conservatively, as an essentially humanist discipline.[176] In 1984's *Tributes: Interpreters of our Cultural Tradition*, Gombrich even chose Sigmund Freud as one of the leading practitioners of that questioning attitude combined with a respect for continuity which was so lauded in *In Search of Cultural History*. Gombrich's Freud is a model of scholarly and scientific restraint:

> The more one concerns oneself with Sigmund Freud's life-work, the more impressed must one be by his personality, his human dignity. We have seen him strictly observe the moral imperative of the scientist never to say more than he

[175] Ibid., p. 44.
[176] See E.H. Gombrich, 'The Study of Art and the Study of Man: Reminiscences of Collaboration with Ernst Kris', in E.H. Gombrich, *Tributes: Interpreters of our Cultural Tradition* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1984), pp. 221-233.

> thought he could answer for. Even the most daring flights of his intellect do not tell us more of his greatness than does this noble reserve.[177]

Emphasising self-control, Gombrich contrasts Freud's attitude to that key concept, the unconscious, with 'the most extreme form of artistic subjectivism, the movement of Surrealism, which relied programmatically on the kinship between the dream and the work of art and hence on the automatism of creation'.[178] Gombrich cites Freud's comments to Stefan Zweig on Salvador Dalí:

> It would indeed be very interesting to explore the origins of a painting by him analytically. Yet, as a critic, one might still be entitled to say that the concept of art resists an extension beyond the point where the quantitative proportion between unconscious material and preconscious elaboration is kept within a certain limit. In any case, however, these are serious psychological problems.[179]

Acknowledging 'the guidance of Ernst Kris', Gombrich interprets the above statement as meaning that, although one might profitably analyse Dalí's work as the analyst would a dream, 'too much unconscious material and too little preconscious elaboration does not result in what Freud would acknowledge as a work of art'.[180]

That Freud's ambivalence over surrealism might have had more to do with a bourgeois sense of propriety is not countenanced by Gombrich:

> [I]t is wholly understandable that it has meanwhile become usual to explain and if possible to excuse Freud's rejection of modern art by pointing to the prejudices of his generation and of his milieu. But it is always somewhat risky to dispose of the views of a great man which we find uncomfortable. Moreover, I think that in the case of Freud this escape route is barred. If there was ever anyone who proved that the prejudices of his generation had no such power over his thought it was Sigmund Freud. We may be quite sure that he had theoretical reasons for his attitude.[181]

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[177] Gombrich, *Tributes*, pp. 114-115.
[178] Ibid., p. 103.
[179] Freud, cited in Gombrich, *Tributes*, p. 104.
[180] Gombrich, *Tributes*, p. 104.
[181] Ibid., p. 103.

In this guise, Freud is an embodiment of that healthily 'distant' humanist sensibility which Gombrich extolled in the study of cultural history. Gombrich allows the older Viennese scholar – significantly a fellow refugee from Nazism – to be perceived as a 'great man' who transcended the prejudices of his generation, replacing them with solid theoretical reasons. Yet at the same time, Gombrich had to account for psychoanalytic interpretations by Freud himself which strove to engage with material beyond the remit of conventional scholarship – the turbulent zone in which Gombrich was unwilling to see any intellectual approach accorded authority.

In particular, Gombrich returned time and again over his career to Freud's interpretation of Leonardo da Vinci's painting of St. Anne, which in 'Psycho-Analysis and the History of Art' he had both credited and demeaned by describing it as the most 'dazzling' of any psychoanalytic art-historical *jeux d'esprit.*[182]

In *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood*, Freud presented da Vinci as a supreme example of sublimated sexuality, with the libido attaching itself to an 'over-powerful instinct for research' – so strong that it drove but also ultimately impeded his artistic work. Investigating da Vinci's reported childhood phantasy of encountering a vulture in his cradle, Freud draws attention to his subject's early childhood, spent as an illegitimate son with his birth mother before being taken in to the household of his father and stepmother. Freud explains da Vinci's genius as the sublimation of homosexuality, itself derived from his relationship with his birth mother. She is identified as being the source of the 'Leonardesque smile' most famously appearing on the lips of the 'Mona Lisa'.

[182] Ibid., p. 31.

Of 'St. Anne with Two Others', da Vinci's painting of St. Anne with her daughter and grandson, Freud writes, 'After we have studied this picture for some time, it suddenly dawns on us that only Leonardo could have painted it, just as only he could have created the phantasy of the vulture. The picture contains the synthesis of the history of his childhood'.[183] Freud's argument is that the two mothers of the painting represent da Vinci's birth mother and stepmother, with the more distant grandmother corresponding to the figure of the earlier, biological mother. The famous, ambivalent Gioconda smile which she bears is interpreted as capturing the complexity of an intimate relationship between Leonardo and the mother that his father had abandoned. Although Freud is very careful to indicate the limits and provisional nature of any psychoanalytic approach to historical biography, he concludes:

> It seems at any rate as if only a man who had had Leonardo's childhood experiences could have painted the 'Mona Lisa' and the 'St Anne', have secured so melancholy a fate for his works, and have embarked on such an astonishing career as a natural scientist, as if the key to all his achievements and misfortunes lay hidden in the childhood phantasy of the vulture.[184]

In each confrontation with this account, Gombrich would return da Vinci's work to the history of representation as a question of technical development, academic territory which Gombrich had largely claimed as his own in his postwar career. Gombrich would render the question entirely in terms of the 'logic of situation':

> Freud thought that Leonardo painted Saint Anne because he had two mothers. But Leonardo painted Saint Anne because she was the patron saint of Florence and he had been commissioned to paint Saint Anne. There is a story in Vasari which I believe. When Leonardo came back from Milan to Florence, Filippino Lippi had been commissioned to paint Saint Anne for the town hall of Florence. And when he heard that Leonardo had arrived, he abandoned his commission

[183] Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood*, trans. by Alan Tyson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 156.
[184] Ibid., p. 185.

> and gave the job to Leonardo. It sounds an unlikely story, but it is probably true, because when Leonardo had left Florence, Filippino had taken over one of his commissions. Anyhow it is a more likely explanation than that he had two mothers![185]

Gombrich suggests elsewhere that the source of Freud's explanation has a provenance rather less respectable than Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*. He cites Freud's 1914 letter to the artist Hermann Struck in which the psychoanalyst writes of the da Vinci study: 'Es ist uebrigens auch halb Romandichtung. Ich moechte nicht, dass Sie die Sicherheit unserer sonstigen Ermittlungen nach diesem Muster beurteilen.'[186] Gombrich lends weight to this excerpt by commenting that it 'deserves to be quoted in full since [Freud] always weighed his words very carefully.'[187]

Gombrich continues: 'When Freud referred to 'novelistic fiction' (*Romandichtung*) he was obviously thinking of the famous historical novel on Leonardo da Vinci [...] by the Russian author D.S. Merezhovsky, published in German in 1903, which is mentioned in Freud's study.'[188] It is certainly true that Freud uses Merezhovsky as a source in his study of da Vinci.[189] Gombrich claims that Freud's interest in Leonardo's childhood 'must indeed have' been provoked by an episode in the novel where da Vinci visits his childhood home and 'remember[s] his mother as in a dream'.[190] Having rendered Freud's sources questionable – largely by insinuation – Gombrich states:

> Even if Freud was right in accepting Merezhovsky's intuition that Leonardo had developed his ideal of womanhood out of memories of his childhood – something that can neither be proven nor refuted – the artist must in any case

[185] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 159.
[186] Gombrich, *Tributes*, p. 95.
[187] Ibid., p. 95.
[188] Ibid., p. 95.
[189] See Freud, *Leonardo*, p. 190.
[190] Gombrich, *Tributes*, p. 95.

> have discovered it among the female types of his master Verrochio [...], which he varied and refined.[191]

Elsewhere, Gombrich protects Freud from the worst of his critique by suggesting the psychoanalyst to be working within a laudable, but not strictly art-historical, Western intellectual heritage leading back to Edmund Burke's 1757 *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.* Burke's text is here described as representing 'the first time that an author undertook to establish aesthetics on biological foundations, [...] thus [striking] a note which still reverberates in Freud's writings'.[192] Freud's psychology is thus spared, although rather at the expense of his art history: Gombrich blames the interpretation on Freud's being 'scarcely aware of the iconographic tradition on which Leonardo drew. But,' he goes on,

> too much emphasis on these sources of error would miss the more important methodological point of what is involved in interpreting an image. For even if Freud's reading of the situation rested on firmer evidence, even if Leonardo had been found on the couch to associate his childhood situation with this particular painting, it should still be obvious that the painting does not mean to refer to his mother and stepmother, but signifies St. Anne and the Virgin.[193]

Gombrich explains further:

> If Leonardo's childhood experience should really have been one of the determining causes for his accepting a commission to paint St. Anne and the Virgin so, we may assume, were other pressures which might conceivably be traced to their source. Maybe the problem attracted him for its difficulty, maybe he was just in need of money. What would matter in any of those cases is only that the innumerable chains of causation which ultimately brought the work into being must on no account be confused with its meaning. The iconologist is concerned with the latter, as far as it can be determined. The historian should remain aware of the complexity and elusiveness of the first.[194]

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[191] Ibid., pp. 109-111.
[192] Ibid., p. 94.
[193] Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, p. 17.
[194] Ibid., p. 17.

On another occasion, Gombrich would be more direct and less sparing of Freud's legacy. In a 1990s interview, Gombrich's interlocutor comments that 'it remains true that all paintings carried out to a similar commission are far from being identical to one another', indicating that even within Gombrich's explanation Freud's interpretation might still be valid.[195] The art historian offers a simple retort resonant with the notions of competition and pursuit of self-interest found in the work of Popper and Hayek: 'The whole point was to do better than the others. And to show by this that you were a great artist.'[196] Freud had his place in Gombrich's intellectual constellation, as a humanist scholar and a psychologist providing useful insight. However, when Freud transgressed into the unknowable zone of turbulence, he would be sharply rebuked. As we have seen in his discussion of artists' personal motives in the article based in his 1953 lecture, Gombrich had little time for the psychoanalytic notion of 'overdetermination' as a conceptual tool for dealing with 'turbulence', something he had also made clear in *Symbolic Images*:

> [T]he concept has its value as a reminder of the many motivations that may overlap in the motivation of anything we say, do, or dream. But strictly speaking any event that occurs is 'over-determined' if we care to look for all the chains of causation, all the laws of nature which come into operation.[197]

Gombrich preferred to understand psychoanalysis as a valuable and sensitive way of understanding the human mind in past ages; an extension, not just of humanist scholarship, but of a specific humanist tradition with strong roots in the Vienna of Freud and Gombrich: *Bildung*.

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[195] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 159.
[196] Ibid., p. 159.
[197] Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, p. 17.

2.2.5 Gombrich and *Bildung*

Many aspects of Gombrich's thought discussed in this brief overview can arguably be seen to have derived from *Bildungskultur*, the interdisciplinary humanist culture prevalent in Vienna and the wider German-speaking lands from the Enlightenment through to the mid-twentieth century.

As Alfred Pfabigan writes in his essay 'Freud's "Vienna Middle"', *Bildung* represented

> a network of allusions and quotations [...] *Bildung,* a concept, as with the English idea of the "gentleman," embracing one's whole existence, was what was "one's own," what one had acquired oneself and therefore something precious. It also meant the "home" of the cultural heritage and the admission ticket for what Peter Gay has called "the European family of high culture[.]"[198]

Gombrich's early life was that of a model *Gebildeter*, or product of *Bildung*. As a child, he had been excited by the study of both natural history and Egyptology.[199]

The values of *Bildung* were imparted through education and above all through the emotionally significant medium of what anthropologists term 'primary' or face-to-face relations amongst intimates, relatives, teachers and peers in Vienna.[200] In a 1990s interview, Gombrich evoked the transmission of *Bildungskultur,* as managed and directed at first hand by one's father:

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[198] Alfred Pfabigan, 'Freud's "Vienna Middle"' in *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, ed. by Steven Beller (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2001), pp. 154-170 (p. 156).

[199] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 34. The interest in egyptology, in particular, was not a passing fancy but stayed with Gombrich. In 1985 he was using the deciphering of hieroglyphs, which he saw as 'close to my own area of interest', as an example of objective progress and a refutation of relativist positions on the status of knowledge. See Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, p. 49.

[200] On the importance of primary relations in establishing concerns and identifications, see De Swann.

> [He] read very often to us children. And he usually read from Homer. He also read translations of Indian poetry, from the Mahabarata, Nala and Damajanti...So that we had a kind of introduction to various civilizations. Children were not supposed to read everything. Our parents suggested: 'Now you should read this, and now you should read that...' and we did. So there came a moment when my parents thought it was time for me to read the German classics and I started reading Schiller, Goethe, and so on. But, it was all, in a way, within the family circle. We went to the theatre, to the Opera...[201]

During Gombrich's years at *Gymnasium*, primary relations would continue to be important in the transmission of *Bildung*. In the same interview, Gombrich mentions that 'the man who taught me German literature [...at the Theresianum] was an extraordinary man. [...] I learned a lot from him'.[202]

At the Theresianum, Gombrich would write poetry[203] and specialize in both German literature and physics for his school-leaving exam, seeking to emulate Goethe: 'If one chose German literature (the very essence of *Bildung*), it meant Goethe above all. And Goethe had had a multiplicity of interests: he was interested in science and he aimed to be a universal man.'[204]

As a university student, Gombrich maintained his literary interests, writing verse and theatrical sketches for which he was highly commended by his future collaborator Ernst Kris.[205] In Gombrich's later professional career, also, many elements testify to the legacy of *Bildung*: the wide-ranging, self-defined interdisciplinary purview; the respect for tradition (albeit a progressive one) over radicalism; the restraint and propriety Gombrich saw and admired in Freud; the disciplined sensibility which would allow a historian to intuit the nature of a historical period; and the scholar's need for a cultured

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[201] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, pp. 30-31.
[202] Ibid., p. 33.
[203] Ibid., p. 32.
[204] Ibid., p. 33.
[205] See ibid., p. 45, where he reports Kris asking: 'Why are you really studying art history when you can write plays like that?''

background and sense of tradition, as exemplified by Gombrich's imagined Victorian editor of Cicero. The scholarly, postwar, emigré Gombrich embodies *Gebildete* values, the values which Steven E. Aschheim has called 'the ideal of the expansion of human possibilities [...] tolerance, cultured self-cultivation, and the primacy of individual autonomy'.[206]

These values are conjured by Gombrich in a lecture through which we can also begin the business of 'reading works for lives'. This lecture, to the Musicus Concertus in Florence, commemorated the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of the Viennese composer and master of the *Lieder* tradition Franz Schubert (1797-1828). In it, Gombrich uses his expertise as a historian to set the composer in social context, but the article is also an opportunity for the author to engage with the native city he was forced to abandon, and with a chain of humanist tradition and memory – *Bildungskultur*, no less – in which he forms the latest link.

From the opening of the lecture, Gombrich's own life is interwoven with his account of the early nineteenth-century composer: an anecdote of Schubert and friends meeting to mark Beethoven's funeral in 1827 leads to a musing on how 'what we call the age of Schubert remained a living memory right to the threshold of this century' and how Gombrich himself touches this 'living memory' through a Viennese acquaintance who in turn knew Schubert's close friend Franz Schober.[207]

This emphasis on memory and continuity persists throughout Gombrich's text. Moritz von Schwind's 1868 drawing and oil sketch of a *Schubertiade* – a celebratory

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[206] Steven E. Aschheim, *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), p. 167. In stating this, Aschheim is following in the steps of George E. Mosse – see section 3.2 below.

[207] E.H. Gombrich, 'Franz Schubert and the Vienna of his Time', in *The Essential Gombrich*, pp. 547-564 (p. 547).

recital of Schubert's works – depicting events which had occurred more than forty years previously, is offered to the reader as possibly 'the only instance of an artist painting his memoirs, rather than writing them'.[208] Gombrich tellingly imagines that 'it must have given Schwind great pleasure to recall the days of his youth and to conjure up in his mind the likenesses of his friends'; it is no great difficulty to imagine that the twentieth-century scholar is treating his own nostalgia as much as Schwind's.[209] For the speaker of 1978, the friends and the Vienna of his youth were also over forty years in the past.

Further parallels, more specific ones, can be drawn between the 'Schubert's Vienna' being represented and the Vienna of Gombrich's own experience. The tightly knit, largely extrauniversity 'academic culture of outsiders', which was a part of Gombrich's Viennese milieu, has its counterpart in Schubert's immediate circle.[210] Both groups share the secular and utopian ideals of *Bildung* to improve the world through joint action in the present day: 'Silently and honestly, as brothers, let us build a better and freer world.'[211] The special attention Gombrich pays to the patronage given to Schubert by his seniors, and the action taken by friends of the composer who had his songs published at their own expense, recalls the solidarity of Viennese scholarship amongst the generation forced into exile in the 1930s. Senior academics in Vienna, such as Julius von Schlosser and Ernst Kris, had taken special care of student *Gebildete* like Gombrich in the difficult times when 'gangs of Nazi students began to go round looking for Jews and beating them up',[212] offering not only pastoral care and intellectual

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[208] Ibid., p. 548.
[209] Ibid., p. 530.
[210] Feichtinger, p. 13. Feichtinger explains how exclusion from universities led to the organisation of a social milieu within which intellectuals and scholars could produce innovative work.
[211] Schubert's close friend Johann Mayrhofer, cited in Gombrich, 'Franz Schubert', p. 559.
[212] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 38.

guidance but also directing them towards congenial professional environments like the Warburg Institute.[213] Amongst the students themselves, there was

> a very close community [...] We were all friends, we threw ourselves into passionate arguments, we went off together to visit monasteries and art collections in the provinces of Austria, and we had very good time. Many friendships developed, of course, and some have lasted all my life.[214]

The Schubert circle of Gombrich's article, like Gombrich's own generation, maintains not only the *gebildeter Mensch*'s commitment to friendship, but also a self-consciously high intellectual standard. The composer himself, we are told, was 'anything but a Philistine',[215] seeking only intellectually 'worthy companions for the evening' when he would attend a reading group.[216] Gombrich's peers in art history at Vienna University had been subject to a similarly stringent 'vetting' by von Schlosser's assistant before being admitted to the professor's circle.[217] Gombrich illustrates Schubert's intellectual 'estrangement from a materialistic age'[218] with a rare poem by the composer which is a lament for an era in which 'the golden rhymes are stupidly mocked,/Disregarding their forceful content'.[219] This lamentation matches the anxiety of defenders of the classical, humanist tradition during the last decade of Austria's First Republic, in which the *Bildungsbürgertum* was politically marginalized by ever more extreme nationalist and socialist forces.[220] The 'vulgar crowd of "sausage eaters and beer drinkers"'[221] who drive the cultured *gebildeter Mensch* from one of his reading

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[213] In Gombrich, *Tributes*, p. 238, Gombrich recounts how Schlosser, if powerless to intervene against the Nazis activists who had assaulted Kurz with a steel truncheon, at least offered solidarity with his student through a quotation out of the *Bildung* canon, 'Monument von unserer Zeiten Schande'. When Nazi takeover of Austria seemed likely, it was Kris who took the initiative in securing Gombrich his place with the Warburg Institute in London. See Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 46.
[214] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 38.
[215] Gombrich, 'Franz Schubert', p. 558.
[216] Ibid., p. 558.
[217] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 38.
[218] Gombrich, 'Franz Schubert', p. 560.
[219] Ibid., p. 561.
[220] See 3.2 below.
[221] Gombrich, 'Franz Schubert', p. 558.

circles conjure that distinction which continued in the twentieth century to mark 'intellectual Vienna' and Austria's 'national heartlands' as mutually hostile locations.[222] This antagonism affected Gombrich's 1930s as much as Schubert's 1820s, being an attribute of the nationalist and National Socialist agitators who would terrorize Viennese students and scholars in the years leading up to *Anschluss*.

In the lecture, perhaps at some level aware of the parallels that might be drawn between his historical account of Schubert and his own life, Gombrich attacks 'a vulgar misunderstanding of [...] compositions [set to poetry] which thoughtlessly and irrationally confuses the composer with the writer of the lyrics, which in their turn are taken to describe real events'.[223] Undermining attempts to relate lives to works by presenting them as a kind of intentional fallacy, he seems to parry the possibility of reading 'Schubert's Vienna' as 'Gombrich's Vienna' with examples of Schubert crassly represented 'as the suffering hero of the *Müllerlieder* or the *Winterreise*'.[224] Even if we must not draw excessively strong connections between the personal experiences and social worlds of Gombrich and Schubert, nonetheless, the shared *Bildungskultur* of two generations of *Wiener* is clearly invoked in this lecture by the émigré art historian.

Karl Popper's biographer Malachi Haim Hacohen has made important steps in understanding the transformations *Bildung* underwent for its devotees in exile and emigration, allowing those devotees to keep their humanist culture alive despite the ruptures of emigration and the devastation wrought by ethnonationalism in their homelands. Hacohen argues, in a 1999 essay on 'Dilemmas of Cosmopolitanism: Karl

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[222] See Matti Bunzl, 'The City and the Self: Narratives of Spatial Belonging Among Austrian Jews', *City & Society* (1996), 50-81; Gunda Barth-Scalmani, Hermann J.W. Kuprian and Brigitte Mazohl-Wallnig, 'National Identity or Regional Identity: Austria Versus Tyrol/Salzburg' in *Austrian Historical Memory and National Identity*, ed. by Günter Bischof and Anton Pelinka, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1997), pp. 32-63.
[223] Gombrich, 'Franz Schubert', p. 559.
[224] Ibid., p. 559.

Popper, Jewish Identity, and "Central European Culture"', that *Bildungskultur,* incarnated in a twentieth-century humanist 'Republic of Letters', 'was the clod of native soil that accompanied [émigré scholars] in exile. But, unlike the soil, it expressed homesickness surreptitiously'.[225]

The following chapter seeks to understand the devotion to *Bildung* as an emotional 'concern' of the type described in my introduction and to examine the relationship of *Bildungskultur* to Jewish identity, with particular reference to Gombrich's life and work. In so doing, the researcher encounters one of the most uncharacteristically controversial and emotionally heated public outbursts of the art historian's career.

[225] Malachi Haim Hacohen, 'Dilemmas of Cosmopolitanism: Karl Popper, Jewish Identity, and "Central European Culture"', *The Journal of Modern History*, 71 (1999), 105-149 (p. 149).

3.0 Gombrich, *Bildung* and Jewish identity

3.1 'Fin de Siècle Vienna and its Jewish Cultural Influences', 1996

On 17 November 1996, Ernst Gombrich gave a paper at the Austrian Cultural Institute, a London-based organisation of the Austrian Embassy promoting Austrian arts and culture in the United Kingdom. The paper, 'The Visual Arts in Vienna circa 1900', was one contribution to a seminar on 'Fin de Siècle Vienna and its Jewish Cultural Influences'.

Gombrich began his paper with a wordy and profusely apologetic introduction:

> I think I should tell you at the outset that I am generally not a person who enjoys giving offence. I am afraid it was actually my reluctance to give offence that prevented me from declining the invitation by the Director of the Austrian Cultural Institute to give this Seminar. I fear I should have chosen the comparatively minor evil, because, I find to my regret, that much of what I shall have to say today is likely to cause a good deal of offence to members of the audience if they expect me to extol what our programme calls 'Jewish Culture'.[1]

For the contemporary scholar tracing emotional concerns in scholarship, Gombrich's comments provide clear evidence of his personal investment in this topic. The art historian was usually mild to the point of equivocation in his public pronouncements. However, the passionate denial of a Jewish cultural identity which

[1] E.H. Gombrich, *The Visual Arts in Vienna Circa 1900: Reflections on the Jewish Catastrophe* (London: Austrian Cultural Institute, 1997), p. 5.

followed was uncharacteristic in its strident and combative nature. His regretful, humble introduction was swiftly followed by a stark announcement: 'I am of the opinion that the notion of Jewish Culture was, and is, an invention of Hitler and his fore-runners and after-runners.'[2]

In this chapter, Gombrich's comments open an investigation of the relationship between the figure of the émigré scholar and the embeddedness of *Bildungskultur* in histories of Jewish assimilation. Gombrich's paper is examined alongside the work of Steven Beller, a historian of Viennese Jews with whom Gombrich took particular issue. The chapter then moves on to discuss the relationship of *Bildung* and Jewish identity at a general level, before closely attending to archival evidence in order to better understand the significance of Jewish identity for Gombrich's mid-twentieth-century emigration.

3.1.1 The city and the *shtetl* – locating Jewish identity in Gombrich's 1996 paper

In the published text of the paper, Gombrich expands on his opening comments by quoting the entirety of a letter by the Viennese art dealer Sergei Sabarsky, which he says 'relieves me of the necessity to explain my attitude, and reassures me that my stance is not wholly an isolated one'.[3]

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[2] Ibid., p. 5.
[3] Ibid., p. 7.

Sabarsky writes in response to the enquiry of a Dr. Tobias Natter about Jewish patronage of *fin de siècle* Viennese art. The art dealer's claim is that

> [t]he overwhelming majority of the Jews of Vienna belonged to the middle classes [....] and certainly did not belong to the patrons of art [...who] were members of old-established Viennese families, who nearly all shared one characteristic: they felt themselves fully as Austrians and never thought of distinguishing themselves from their non-Jewish compatriots. They did not regard their traditional religion as a reason for differentiation [...] In fact they felt themselves to be cosmopolitans of Austrian nationality.[4]

The point of the letter, and of Gombrich's lecture, can be encapsulated in one sentence: 'To make a distinction between Aryan and non-Aryan human beings belongs, nolens volens, to the theory of the Nürnberg [*sic*] laws, even if it is done ever so philosemitically, and all the more if it is.'[5]

At this early stage Gombrich seems to be reiterating, somewhat emphatically and as much through Sabarsky's voice as his own, a general humanist credo he had offered elsewhere, that although 'we must never [...] look down on other cultures whose values and convictions differ from ours [...] the recognition of [cultural] differences must not lead us to deny the unity of Mankind'.[6]

However, in his 1996 lecture, having seemingly moved to obliterate ethnic distinctions, Gombrich quickly proceeds to reintroduce them. Much as Sabarsky's writing subtly distinguishes between a Jewish middle class and 'old-established Viennese families [...who] never thought of distinguishing themselves from their non-Jewish compatriots',[7] Gombrich's position is not, as it initially seems, blind to ethnicity, but rather transposes Jewish identity from Viennese high culture to the distant site of the

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[4] Sergei Sabarsky, cited in Gombrich, *Visual Arts in Vienna*, pp. 7-8.
[5] Ibid., p. 9.
[6] Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, pp. 7-8.
[7] Sabarsky, cited in Gombrich, *Visual Arts in Vienna*, pp. 7-8.

shtetl. Removing himself and many of his peers from the area marked as explicitly 'Jewish', he states, 'To be frank, it is utterly unrealistic, not to say ignorant, to talk of Jewish culture while ignoring the distinction between Eastern Jews [...] and the assimilated Jews of Germany and Austria.'[8]

To support his views, Gombrich draws on the autobiography of *shtetl*-born Jewish artist Yehudo Epstein (1870-1946). Epstein's Minsk milieu is one in which

> time stood still at the same spot for a thousand years, and could not resolve to progress. A whole people lay in a lethargic sleep, dreamt of nothing but the past and did not want to perceive the present. The Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, the sacrifice of Abraham, the seizure of Canaan, Nebuchadnezzar, the Pharaoh, were still topical matters, and personalities in whom one was vividly interested.[9]

Jewishness here is excluded from modernity, rendered instead as a stagnant identity centred on ritual and wilfully blind to the present. This was not the first time Gombrich had employed Epstein to figure this exclusion. In a preface to *Art and Illusion*, Gombrich hit on the inspired notion of explaining his argument regarding pictorial representation by stating what the extreme opposite to his claim would be. He writes:

> It would be a state of affairs in which every person wielding a brush could always achieve fidelity to nature. The mere desire to preserve the likeness of a beloved person or of a beautiful view would then suffice for the artist to 'copy what he sees'. Those would be right who regard all deviations from nature in non-naturalistic styles as intentional. This view looks plausible in our world because most city dwellers have absorbed a great deal of knowledge of pictorial effects from posters and picture postcards. We have no right whatsoever to assume a similar freedom of choice for those who cannot pick up the trick at second hand. I recently came across an episode in the memoirs of a painter that illustrates this point. Brought up among orthodox Jews in Poland who did not admit pictorial representations, Jehudo Epstein tells us in *Mein Weg von Ost nach West* [...] how pathetically he failed when he tried for the first time to

[8] Gombrich, *Visual Arts in Vienna*, p. 18.
[9] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

> sketch a castle on a hill in his home town and what a revelation it was to him when somebody then lent him a textbook on perspective.[10]

In *Art and Illusion* it is the stagnant *shtetl* which cannot produce the technical, teachable, and therefore 'progressive' advance of rendering perspective on a flat surface. Although the passage does not lay undue emphasis on Epstein's background, it is of note as a clear prefiguration of the 1996 paper.

In the later paper, both Gombrich and his source Sabarsky are evidently troubled by the legacy of Nazi persecution when they try to negotiate the identity of people who do not consider themselves Jews, but who may be of Jewish background. In using the terms 'Jews' and 'gentiles', Gombrich describes himself as acting 'somewhat *contre coeur*': 'We lack a term to designate all individuals of Jewish ancestry, and thus we cannot but use basically racist terminology.'[11] Sabarsky similarly struggles for appropriate terminology when he writes:

> Among the c. 180, 000 Viennese Jews, there was a number of very well-to-do-families: they felt themselves fully as Austrians and never thought of distinguishing themselves from their non-Jewish compatriots [...] Since many of them were not religious, this sense of belonging was facilitated. In fact they felt themselves to be cosmopolitans of Austrian nationality [...] They did not know, or did not want to know, that regardless of their degree of assimilation they were seen by their Christian neighbours as Jews.[12]

Sabarsky finds himself at once naming these figures as 'Jews' in his first sentence, then utterly downplaying this identity in all that follows. The conclusion to Sabarsky's letter, cited by Gombrich, highlights the difficulty presented by the two Viennese commentators' accounts:

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[10] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, p. xi.
[11] Gombrich, *Visual Arts in Vienna*, p. 19.
[12] Sabarsky, cited in Gombrich, *Visual Arts in Vienna*, pp. 7-8.

> I like to ask my German friends: 'What was Heinrich Heine – a German poet or a Jewish one? What was Felix Mendelssohn – a German composer or a Jewish one? – Or Max Liebermann – a German painter or a Jewish one?'[13]

Sabarsky is right to criticize and complicate any simplistic and mutually exclusive division of 'the Germans and the Jews' in cultural history, but by arguing for the irrelevance of Jewish identity to historical actors' cultural contributions, he refuses the possibility of more complex negotiations between those actors' overlapping identities, such as have recently been argued for in the case of Liebermann.[14] Steven E. Aschheim's study *Brothers and Strangers* highlights the extent to which the polarised images of the '*shtetl*' and 'assimilated' Jew shaped understandings of Jewish identity in the pre-World War 2 era. He writes:

> The existence of the ghetto, as myth and reality, colored profoundly the fate and disposition of emancipated Western Jewry. The "Ostjude" and "German Jew" were archetypal representations of the dichotomy, major actors in a new kind of confrontation marked by both tension and creativity. Mirror opposites, they remained bound to each other. Whether negatively or positively conceived, idealized or despised, the Ostjude was regarded as the "real" Jew and the living model of *Ur* Jewishness lost to German Jewry.[15]

For Sabarsky and Gombrich, any scholarly attempt to explore a contribution to Viennese cultural life traceable to Jewishness is equated to racist categorisations of the Nuremberg laws. Given Gombrich's own Jewish background, both his direct comments and his citation of Sabarsky could seem to support a diagnosis of 'Jewish self-hatred', a term coined by Sander Gilman. According to Gilman, there has existed throughout Jewish history a particular Jewish anti-Semitism, arising from the moment 'when the desire of acceptance [in wider society] forces the acknowledgement of one's difference',[16] provoking an ongoing 'preoccupation of Jews in the West with their Otherness'.[17] However, as discussed in 3.2.2 below, the approach to émigré identities in this thesis, based as it is on the concept of the cosmopolitan 'Central European' who need not be Jewish, precludes deeper engagement with Gilman here. However, it

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[13] Ibid., p. 10.
[14] On ways of viewing Liebermann's Jewish identity which provide an alternative to Gombrich's, see my book review, Mathew [*sic*] Finch, 'Gilbert, Barbara C., ed., *Max Liebermann: From Realism to Impressionism*', *East European Jewish Affairs*, 36 (2006), 233-234.
[15] Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (London and Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), p. 252.
[16] Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (London and Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 4.
[17] Ibid., p. 13.

remains significant that any attempt to explore Jewish cultural contributions was denounced in the strongest possible terms by Gombrich in 1996. These attempts included, for Gombrich, the work of Steven Beller, a historian of Vienna's Jews mentioned by the émigré art historian in his 1996 paper.

3.1.2 Gombrich's paper as response to Steven Beller

Certainly, there is an argument to dissuade students of 'Vienna 1900', such as attended the 1996 seminar, from claims on a par with the Viennese writer Stefan Zweig's famous declaration that 'neun Zehntel von dem, was die Welt als Wiener Kultur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts feierte, war eine vom Wiener Judentum geförderte, genährte, oder sogar schon selbstgeschaffene Kultur',[18] or from the attitude of those whom Michael P. Steinberg, following Ivar Oxaal, has typified as

> ethnic maximalists [...] who see Austrian modernism as a Jewish phenomenon, both on the level of creation and that of consumption [...causing] a philo-Semitic inversion of the persisting anti-Semitic position [...in which] Jewishness and intellectuality are united into a relationship of determinism and essentialism. The Jewish problem becomes the Jewish phenomenon.[19]

However, it is important to note that Gombrich's paper took specific issue with the work of Steven Beller. This historian of 'Vienna 1900' has made a case, from the late 1980s into the twenty-first century, for a preponderance of Jewish and Jewish-descended people among the patrons of, and contributors to,

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[18] Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern: Erinnerungen eines Europäers* (London and Stockholm: Hamish Hamilton/Bermann Fischer-Verlag, 1941), p. 30.
[19] Michael P. Steinberg, 'Jewish Identity and Intellectuality in Fin-de-Siècle Austria: Suggestions for a Historical Discourse', *New German Critique*, 43 (1988), 3-33 (p. 11).

> the modern culture of Vienna 1900 [...] Further, the Jewish background of these individuals, whether in the form of secularized religious tradition, the ideology of emancipation, the very forms of assimilation themselves, or the existential problems of living in an anti-Semitic environment, had strongly influenced them, and [...] this had been reflected in their work. Through them, the Jewish background had thus had a large influence on Viennese modern culture generally[.][20]

Although Beller's own description of his thesis may seem open to the critique of philo-Semitism made by Steinberg and Gombrich, Beller's work is in fact scrupulous about avoiding such blind claims. In his key work on the topic, *Vienna and the Jews 1867-1938,* Beller sees himself as opening up the historical question of Vienna's relationship to its Jewish populace, rather than defining it. He himself draws attention to 'the problems faced when trying to establish a definite influence [on, say, Freud] from any specific Jewish tradition'.[21] His book presents itself as a

> study [which] is far from being the last word on the subject of the Jewish influence in Viennese culture, nor does it wish to be seen as such [...] It is hoped that it will effectively reopen the debate on how to approach the problem, and moreover will direct that discussion along more productive paths than has hitherto been the case.[22]

Gombrich's 1996 paper was addressed as a response to a specific article written by Beller, 'Was bedeutet es, 'Wien um 1900' als eine jüdische Stadt zu bezeichnen?', published in *Zeitgeschichte* in the year of the Cultural Forum seminar. This was provided to Gombrich by the seminar organizer, Emil Brix. Certainly, there are elements of Beller's article which can be seen as provocative to a figure of Gombrich's background and intellectual sensibilities. However, there are also aspects of the same article which complicate and enrich any evaluation of Gombrich's own paper.

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[20] Steven Beller, 'Introduction' in *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, pp. 1-25 (p. 9).
[21] Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938: A Cultural History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 87.
[22] Ibid., p. 8.

In the article, Beller distances himself from the thesis, which he attributes to George Steiner among others, 'daß die Basis dieser kulturellen und intellektuellen Kreativität der Jahrhundertwende die Wiener jüdischer Herkunft waren, von Freud zu Wittgenstein etwa, die diese ideenreiche Kultur hervorgebracht haben'.[23]

Beller argues that serious empirical research into the question is lacking, and that the thesis sounds bizarre in itself. However, he also writes, less comfortingly for one of Gombrich's perspective, that a consideration of the key figures of 'Vienna 1900' makes such a thesis seem less incredible.[24] Beller gestures to the prominence of people of Jewish background in Freud's circle, 'Jung-Wien', Austromarxism, the Vienna Circle and the social reformers who gathered around Josef Popper-Lynkeus, as well as among the patrons of the creative arts.

Beller's article refines the thesis of Carl E. Schorske that 'Vienna 1900' owed its efflorescence to a retreat into cultural pursuits by a politically beleaguered liberal middle class.[25] Beller argues that the middle class in its broadest sense was composed of bureaucrats, rather than educated and cultured *Gebildete*. These bureaucrats were, he argues, susceptible to the appeal of Vienna's Christian Socials with their mass politics, anti-liberal policies and anti-Semitism. Beller uses school rolls to trace the number of *Gymnasiasten* of Jewish background, finding that while Jews composed only a third of all such pupils, two thirds of *Gymnasiasten* with a father in the 'liberal professions' were Jewish. Therefore, in a self-confessed approximation, Beller tells us: 'Kurz gesagt:

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[23] Steven Beller, 'Was bedeutet es, 'Wien um 1900' als eine jüdische Stadt zu bezeichnen?', *Zeitgeschichte*, 7/8 (1996), 274-280 (p.275).
[24] Ibid., p. 275.
[25] See Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1981).

Es scheint, daß zwei Drittel der Sozialreserve von Schorskes Fin de Siècle-Kultur jüdischer Herkunft war.'[26]

Peter Pulzer, conducting statistical work in his book *The Rise of Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria,* comments that '[t]here is no doubt that Jews were "over-represented" (if one accepts such a concept in the educated classes and the [liberal] professions.'[27] John W. Boyer's comments in his *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna* also support Beller in their indication that Viennese middle-class bureaucrats were susceptible to Christian Social pledges to drive Jews from municipal service, thus opening up new employment opportunities.[28]

Beller's thesis here suggests that the Jewish presence in the *Bildungsbürgertum* was defined almost *ex negativo* by anti-Semitic tendencies, but this is rather undermined by his comment that

> Die Juden in Deutschland und auch in Österreich haben an der verehrten deutschen, aufgeklärt-liberalen Kultur teilgenommen, aber auch ihre eigene Identität nicht ganz verloren, sondern darin aufgehoben. Sie sind Mitglieder einer deutschen Kultur, aber auch einer jüdisch-deutschen 'Subkultur' geworden.[29]

Although this potentially refers to the generation of Gombrich's parents and earlier, it is also possible to see this as a direct, if possibly unintentional, challenge to the reported historical experience of one like Gombrich who described himself as having maintained no real connection to Jewish tradition.

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[26] Beller, 'Was bedeutet es', p. 277.
[27] Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*, rev. edn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 11.
[28] John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 30.
[29] Beller, 'Was bedeutet es', p. 278.

Nonetheless, on the issue of Jewish ethnicity and inheritance, Beller is also more subtle than Gombrich gives him credit for. While Beller's vision of 'Vienna 1900' acknowledges 'eine Frage der Quantität oder der Zahlen: Wie viele der Menschen, die 'Wien um 1900' hervorbrachten, waren jüdisch bzw. jüdischer Herkunft?',[30] he also emphasizes 'eine qualitative Frage, das heißt, waren die kulturellen Errungenschaften, die von diesen Menschen, dieser Kultur geschaffen wurden, inhaltlich 'jüdisch'? (Was immer das bedeuten soll[])]'.[31] Beller offers a response to the question, which is that assimilation into the dominant Christian community and the force of the *Haskalah* or 'Jewish Enlightenment' yoked Jewish traditions of religious learning to *Bildungskultur* and created a great intellectual impulse, but his account is not presented as one which excludes others.[32] Where Gombrich's contribution aimed to close down the debate, Beller opens a wider exploration, exploring the ambiguities of the term *Judentum* while carefully excluding racism:

> Auf Englisch gibt es kein elegantes Wort für die Übersetzung von 'Judentum'. Und ich meine, dies ist sehr gut so. Der Begriff 'Judentum' enthält mehr an Problematik, als er erklärt. Er ist zu verschwommen, zu abstract und zu vieldeutig, um eine bestimmte Bedeutung zu tragen. Manchmal versteht man darunter die jüdische Religion, manchmal das jüdische Volk, und nicht selten etwas Geistig-Abstraktes, das entweder in der Luft, im Äther, oder gar im Blut liegt. Solche Dinge meine ich nicht, und das wichtigste Resultat meiner Schulstatistiken ist, daß man die überragende Position von Juden in der Wiener Moderne [...] ableiten kann, ohne ein 'genetisches' Mehrbegabtsein als Erklärung heranzuziehen.[33]

Gombrich himself had taken a attitude at least reconcilable with Beller's thesis on a previous occasion, stating: 'That the Viennese contribution to the modern world was in large part Jewish [...] is a considerable oversimplification, and one would have

[30] Ibid., p. 274.
[31] Ibid., p. 274.
[32] Ibid., p. 278. On the *Haskalah*, see 3.2 below.
[33] Beller, 'Was bedeutet es', p. 277.

to analyse it at much greater length to establish whether it were true'.[34] However, in the Cultural Institute lecture, he uses Sabarsky's letter and Epstein's autobiography to block such investigations, displacing Jewish cultural identity entirely onto the distant locale of the *shtetl* and responding to Beller's list of assimilated Jewish cultural superstars with his own list of non-Jews, including Schiele, Klimt, Kokoschka, Loos, Otto Wagner, the architects of the Ringstrasse, Vienna's *Art Nouveau* and *Wiener Werkstätte* movements, the Secessionists and many more.[35] The links which Beller's exploration posits between *Bildung* and Jewishness are fiercely denied and moves towards empirical research, like Beller's tentative counting of *Gymnasium* school rolls, countered with 'reassuring' citation of Sabarsky.

It should be noted that, while Gombrich approvingly cited Epstein's account of the *shtetl* as 'realistic' and 'describing the milieu from which the author came with unprejudiced clarity',[36] his own personal contact with the *shtetl* or the community of *Ostjuden* appears to have been highly limited. Although both his parents were 'of Jewish extraction', as he puts it, his father was a lawyer, originally from Frankfurt, and the son of an Offenbach-born lace dealer, while his mother was born in Vienna, daughter of a businessman native to the major Austrian imperial city of Prague. Indeed, as Gombrich himself was to state, 'when I think of history I think of Western culture rather than the culture of the ghetto, of which I know, perhaps, too little'.[37]

As this phrase hints, the tradition of *Bildung* is deeply significant for Gombrich's life history, especially in the context of the dialectics of 'assimilation' and identity for the Jewish people. Gombrich's relationship to this cultural tradition has

[34] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 14.
[35] Gombrich, *Visual Arts in Vienna*, p. 12.
[36] Ibid., p. 13.
[37] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 28.

already been discussed in the previous chapter.[38] The significance of *Bildung* for the current chapter lies in the links, occluded by Gombrich but overwhelmingly emphasized in contemporary historical scholarship, which connect *Bildung* and the experience of the Jewish people in German-speaking lands from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

3.2 *Bildung,* Jewish identity and emigration

Recent scholarship on Austrian and German Jewish experience in the nineteenth and early twentieth century suggests that the Enlightenment humanism of *Bildungskultur* was seized upon by Jews as an escape from the ghetto following emancipation and the rise of the progressive intellectual movement known as the *Haskalah*, by which Jewish thinkers encouraged their community to take up the principles of the European Enlightenment. This account goes on to suggest that *Bildungskultur* ultimately came to be the exclusive possession of a small and beleaguered liberal bourgeoisie, amongst the ranks of which there numbered many assimilated Jews. This *Bildungsbürgertum* was effectively destroyed under the National Socialist regime, except insofar as members of it who fled, such as Gombrich, were able to continue its intellectual and cultural legacy overseas.

As Steven E. Aschheim writes, 'From the late eighteenth century on, German Jews had constructed themselves in that [*Bildungs*-]culture's image – indeed, in crucial ways were to become partially constitutive of it[.]'[39] George L. Mosse's study *German*

[38] See 2.2.5 above.
[39] Steven E. Aschheim, *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 1.

Jews Beyond Judaism describes how for 'assimilated' Jews like Gombrich's parents – who, as Gombrich put it, felt themselves to be neither Jewish nor especially Christian[40] –'the void [...] was filled by the ideal of *Bildung*, which had prevailed among the German bourgeois during the period of Jewish emancipation',[41] an ideal 'ready-made for Jewish assimilation, because it transcended all differences of nationality and religion[.]'[42]

This identity-giving secular faith was empowered, from its adherents' perspective, by belief in transcendent reason and the products of classical tradition; what seems to have gone unrecognized at the time is that *Bildungskultur* was in fact sustained by a historically contingent political power, that of liberalism in the German-speaking lands.

> Peter Pulzer's *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* posits that the visible benefits Jews accrued from universalism and social mobility attracted the resentment of artisans, peasants and traditional élites, all fearful of the social changes attendant on the Enlightenment. Anti-Semitism became 'the outlet for all those who [felt] that Liberalism, with its moral obligations, inhibits desires or personalities – or that Liberalism, with its equality of opportunity, leaves the sufferer at an unfair disadvantage'.[43]

> Of Gombrich's native Vienna specifically, Steven Beller himself writes that

> however much the "bourgeois" elements [...] felt comfortable with, and even supported, the Christian Socials, Viennese liberalism collapsed, and with it the hopes of one of its core groups of supporters, the Jews, who could not, and did not, feel at all comfortable under [anti-Semitic mayor Karl] Lueger's regime.[44]

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[40] IWM 4521/03/01-03.
[41] George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington and Cincinatti, OH: Indiana University Press and Hebrew Union College Press, 1985), p. 42.
[42] Ibid., p. 3. See also the discussion in Marion Kaplan, '1812: The German romance with *Bildung* begins, with the publication of Rahel Levin's correspondence about Goethe' in *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture 1096-1996*, ed. by Sander L. Gilman and Jack Zipes (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 124-128.
[43] Pulzer, p. 58.
[44] Beller, 'Introduction', p. 19.

In these historical accounts, rising nationalist theories of the racially pure *Volk* rejected *deutsche Bürger* of Jewish background or ancestry; 'many Germans attempted to nationalize and romanticize' *Bildung* itself into a tradition suiting this tendency;[45] poachers turned gamekeepers as the Austrian regime of the *fin-de-siècle* legitimized anti-Semites and nationalists by co-opting them against the threat of socialism; and by the time of Gombrich's youth, classical *Bildung*, no longer sustained by a political authority, was the province of an alienated liberal bourgeoisie. This social class was largely composed of assimilated Jews, to whom the alternative options of racial or Christian nationalism were not available. As one commentator has written, 'German-acculturated Jews were cosmopolitanism's main carriers. They were the only group that could gain nothing from ethnonationalism[.]'[46]

The association between Jewish identity and *Bildungskultur* seems to hold good in one of the interviews with Didier Eribon that comprise Gombrich's quasi-autobiographical book *A Lifelong Interest*. When asked how the 'intellectual atmosphere' of Vienna shaped him, Gombrich comments:

> [T]he Viennese middle classes at the beginning of the twentieth century attached a great deal of importance to something they called *Bildung*, that is, culture at a general level. I can't deny that there was an element of social snobbery in it, but nobody was taken seriously or accepted socially if they did not take part in this general culture, in music, literature and art. [...] Beside this value placed on *Bildung*, the middle classes also attached great importance to correct behaviour, to the avoidance of vulgarity in all its forms – and there too there was an element of snobbery.[47]

Again the *Gebildeter/Ostjude* distinction arises, as the example given of snobbery is Karl Kraus (1874-1936), a writer of Jewish background. Gombrich explains that Kraus 'especially loved to make fun of immigrant Jews, who contributed to

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[45] Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism*, p. 7.
[46] Hacohen, 'Dilemmas', p. 106.
[47] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, pp. 26-27.

newspapers without being completely fluent in German'.[48] At the same time the extent to which the poles of this distinction might in fact be entwined is hinted at when Eribon asks of the art historian, 'And you yourself [were aware of Jewish tradition]?'

Gombrich's response ('No, I have never been touched by Jewish education') leads immediately into a lengthy discussion of his mother's devotion to classical music, which in turn, seemingly almost unwittingly on Gombrich's part, leads back to Sigmund Freud's proclivity (reported by Gombrich's mother) for 'telling Jewish stories'.[49] The opposed categories appear to have more points of contact than might be comfortable for the émigré *Gebildeter* to admit.

Gombrich's 1996 citation of Jehudo Epstein's account of the ghetto must be understood with reference to this context of a powerful educational ideal implicated in the adherent's sense of self. By coming to Vienna and studying Fine Arts, Epstein had made his own investment in *Bildung* – hence his autobiography's reproduction of the binary opposition that made, in David Sorkin's words, 'the *Ostjuden* [...] the antithesis of *Bildung*, representing all the negative characteristics of a Jewry that had not yet benefited from the Enlightenment'.[50] Epstein's representation of the *shtetl* denies a specifically Jewish, self-improving dynamism. This runs counter to Steven Beller's approach, which suggests that just such a dynamism might have broadly impelled Austrian Jews as keen proponents of *Bildungskultur,* prefiguring the cultural and intellectual concerns that structured Gombrich's own life and work.

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[48] Ibid., p. 27. See also the discussion of Kraus in Gombrich, *Visual Arts in Vienna*, p. 19.
[49] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest,* pp. 15-16.
[50] David Sorkin, 'The Impact of Emancipation on German Jewry: A Reconsideration', in *Assimilation and Community: the Jews in nineteenth-century Europe*, ed. by Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 177-198 (p. 188).

Not only in his 1996 paper, but in a 1979 interview lodged at the Archives of the Imperial War Museum in London, Gombrich reproduces the distinction made by the assimilated *Bildungsbürgertum* between Jews from Eastern European territories and his own peers' status as people of Jewish background who

> looked upon the Jewish tradition as deplorable superstition. They didn't really think that the Christian religion was in every respect *not* a deplorable superstition, but they thought, these are not issues of such importance that one should...make a fuss over them. [...Even of those who took instruction in learning Hebrew,] none of them would have hesitated to eat a ham sandwich.[51]

He also states:

> [B]efore the advent of official antisemitism in intellectual, academic circles these were not very great issues – at least, among artists for instance, and among musicians. One didn't ask is this pianist Jewish and this violinist non-Jewish, and so on. It was really not much of an issue. Of course, gradually it became one, and I always made a point of it –an almost exaggerated point that if I knew someone to be an anti-Semite I would just ignore them. I would not want to inflict myself on them, you see. That I also did at the university.[52]

Gombrich explains in the same interview that he scarcely ever experienced personal anti-Semitic attack, although he vaguely recalls an unspecified incident on a beach. He renders the visible difference of the *Ostjuden* as a far greater threat, remembering Nazi posters bearing the slogan, 'Where did the Jews with their kaftans go?' – a rhetorical move which uses the distinction of the *Ostjuden* to 'expose' assimilated persons of Jewish background.[53]

Contrasting them with his *bildungsbürgerlich* peers, Gombrich would declare the distinctively 'Eastern' Jews to be 'known to be not very particularly clean and not

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[51] IWM 4521/03/01-30.
[52] Ibid..
[53] Ibid..

very particularly honest', pariahs in the world of *Bildung*.[54] At a stretch, this stereotyping, qualified as it is by acknowledgement of the immigrants' difficult circumstances, can be incorporated into the differences between cultural values which Gombrich acknowledged hand in hand with the 'unity of Mankind'. Gombrich would allow in reminiscences that Eastern Jews had come from poor backgrounds and had to live on their wits in the capital city – 'the standards were different from those of the respectable middle class'.[55] However, in the same reminiscences Gombrich also mentions that the culpability of the prosperous and respectable Viennese Jewish savings bank head Sigmund Bosel (1893-1945) in the crash at Vienna's *Postsparkasse* had indirectly encouraged popular anti-Semitism.[56] Gombrich could acknowledge that anti-Semitism was not simply provoked by the unassimilated *shtetl* Jews, but nonetheless his accounts of the Vienna of his past would dramatise the issue of Jewish identity almost entirely through the figure of the *Ostjude*.

Gombrich's comments resonate with unpublished early drafts of Karl Popper's autobiography studied by Malachi Haim Hacohen. According to Hacohen, these documents represent an attempt to 'delegitimize Jewish identity and Jewish heritage'.[57] They share something of the Gombrich lecture's polemical tone:

> His father's conversion, Popper said, met with "attacks" by "organised Judaism." The Jews were "guests" in Austria [...] His paternal family looked "typically Austrian," but most Jews looked different, and some "behaved in a manner that made the rest blush." [...] The logic of racial pride of both Jews and non-Jews led to racial war.[58]

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[54] Ibid..
[55] Ibid..
[56] Ibid..
[57] Malachi Haim Hacohen, 'Popper's Cosmopolitanism: Culture Clash and German Jewry', in *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, pp. 171-194 (p. 187).
[58] Ibid., pp. 187-188.

In the Cultural Institute lecture, Gombrich's discussion of this issue is at one point worded in such a way that it leaves him open to the accusation of racial prejudice. His confused discussion of genetics, seemingly a misguided attempt to take on 'the logic of racial pride' on its own terms, states:

> We all have two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and after ten generations we should have two to the power of ten, that is one thousand and twenty-four ancestors, unless there was intermarriage. In my case, the likelihood that all my ancestors shared all their genes with Abraham seems to be minimal - all the less as Judaism only recognises matrilinear descent.[59]

Although Judaism might only recognize matrilinear descent, genetic inheritance is not so restricted – and nor, necessarily, is a historiography interested in Central European ethnicities. The uncomfortable situation Gombrich faced is that both Nazi racism and today's legitimate historical inquiry could be interested in the Jewish heritage of people who neither formed part of a Jewish community nor recognized themselves as Jewish individuals. Failing to differentiate racism from the scholarly investigation of cultural backgrounds and contexts, Gombrich seeks to render both intellectually invalid. His own life story as one who fled his native country at the time of the Nazis' rise can be seen to have inflected this intellectual move, as we shall see in the next section.

[59] Gombrich, *Visual Arts in Vienna*, p. 20.

3.2.1 Beyond nations: 'The Republic of Letters'

Even when their work seems to attack or blame victims of ethnonationalism, it is difficult not to empathize with the likes of Gombrich and Popper. Evidence suggests that loss of, or even threats to, the *Bildung*-shaped identity could be highly traumatic. Where *Gebildete* found themselves under persecution by a regime in which 'the isolated individual had to relinquish all of German culture, including Dürer and Reger, Gryphius and Trakl, to even the lowest SS man', their place in *Bildungskultur* and attendant sense of self could even be destroyed.[60]

The words cited come from a Viennese inmate of Auschwitz, Hans Mayer (1912-1978), who survived his wartime experiences and became a writer in the Francophone world. After the Second World War, Mayer changed his name to Jean Améry, as if his discarding of ruined *Bildung* also required him to dispense with his Viennese bourgeois identity. *Bildungskultur* had profoundly constituted Mayer's sense of self, and without access to it, existence was scarcely possible. Mayer was, significantly, only three years younger than Gombrich and, as Primo Levi indicates, another 'assimilated' figure who, though not baptised, celebrated Christmas and did not even know of Yiddish until he was nineteen years old.[61] Nancy Wood's valuable comments on Améry's postwar identity indicate the trauma that imposition of Jewish identity under the Nuremberg laws could hold for *Gebildete* who perceived themselves as ethnically unmarked. Wood writes, 'Learning that he was a Jew *in the eyes of the*

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[60] Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities*, trans. by Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (London: Granta, 1999), p. 8.
[61] See Primo Levi, 'The Intellectual in Auschwitz', in *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. by Raymond Rosenthal (London: Sphere Books, 1989), pp. 102-120.

world was (and remained) for Améry inseparable from an awareness that he was also Nazism's designated victim',[62] and explains Améry's insistence

> that what binds him to [his 'Holocaust-determined' Jewish] identity is less the material experience of the subjugation that he endured than a *memory* of the abandonment that had condemned him to this physical fate and his subsequent loss of 'trust in the world'. In other words, it was not the injuries inflicted by the perpetrator as such, but the fact that they represented society's failure actively to defend him against such persecution, that Améry believes to be constitutive of his irreducible identity as a victim.[63]

Although Popper, Gombrich and many other émigrés escaped the tragedy of Jean Améry, and were able to maintain that sense of intellectual and personal continuity which permeates their works, they too faced crises of identity in their experience of emigration and exile.

Austrians of a Jewish background faced an especially difficult situation. A German of Jewish background like Peter Gay might write that in spite of ethnonationalism, 'We *were* Germans; the gangsters who had taken control of the country were not Germany – *we* were [...] Germany, after all, was the most civilized of countries'.[64] Austrian émigrés were not so fortunate. 'Real' Austrian identity was a mass of contradictions since the collapse of the Habsburg Empire in 1918. Austria, shorn of imperial holdings, had not combined with Germany according to Woodrow Wilson's principle of national self-determination (indeed, even the name *Deutschösterreich* was refused to the new republic), and instead was left as a rump state.[65]

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[62] Wood, p. 71.
[63] Ibid., p. 62.
[64] Peter Gay, *My German Question: Growing up in Nazi Berlin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 111–12.
[65] On *Deutschösterreich*, see Michael P. Steinberg, *The Meaning of the Salzburg Festival: Austria as Theatre and Ideology, 1890-1938* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp.116-123.

Gombrich, whose subscription to the principles of *Bildung* in any case estranged him from the ethnonationalism of a Germanic Austria, but whose republican loyalties also made imperialist nostalgia unacceptable to him, could not seek refuge in an imagined nation of the past or present, however much the territories of a nostalgically envisioned 'Central Europe' might have corresponded geographically with those of Austria-Hungary.[66] Significantly, 'Austria' remained a confused marker for identity well beyond the Second World War, even among its own citizens: when surveys asked Austrians the question 'Is Austria a nation?' in 1965 and 1977, they received positive responses of only forty-eight and sixty-two per cent respectively![67] Émigrés found themselves to be former inhabitants of a homeland whose postwar identity was potentially as much in flux as their own.

The changing face of Austrian national identity has a part to play in the issues under discussion here, as it explains in part the very different approaches taken towards 'Jewish Vienna' by Beller and Gombrich in 1996. Beller's article, 'Was bedeutet es, 'Wien um 1900' als eine jüdische Stadt zu bezeichnen?', addresses itself to a late-twentieth-century Austria whose one-time President, Kurt Waldheim, had been implicated in Nazi genocide; whose fiftieth anniversary commemorations of *Anschluss* continued to marginalize Jewish suffering at Austrian hands in favour of perpetuating the nation's mythical status as 'First Victim of Nazism'; and whose own Jewish community was increasingly vocal in its critique of mainstream national society.[68] Beller writes, in the 1996 article which so offended Gombrich, that the issue of a Jewish

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[66] On late-twentieth-century 'Central Europe' as a domain inflected with nostalgia for the Habsburg Empire, see Finch, 'Official History'.

[67] Anthony Bushell, 'Austria's Second Coming: The Literary Response to a Restored Austria in the Early Years of the Second Republic' in *The Phoney Peace: Power and Culture in Central Europe 1945-49,* ed. by Robert B. Pynsent (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies University College London, 2000), pp. 288-293 (p. 290).

[68] On all these issues, see Finch, 'Official History'.

contribution to 'Vienna 1900' is 'allzu aktuell', speaking to 'das jetzige Selbstverständnis der Österreicher, mit all den Diskussionen über die österreichische Geschichte im Jahr des Millenniums'.[69] Beller's historiography supports his contemporary political argument 'daß die Österreicher *dennoch* diese ['Vienna 1900'] Kultur als 'österreichisch' betrachten können, das heißt, als ihre 'Kultur', aber nur, wenn man auch die andere [i.e., Jewish] Seite der Sache erkennt und auch anerkennt.'[70] He goes on:

> Wenn man nicht die jüdische Seite des 'Wien um 1900' erkennt und anerkennt, und wenn man nicht das volle Ausmaß von dem, was zwischen 1938 und 1945 passiert ist, ansieht, dann wird man nie mit der Vergangenheit ins Reine kommen können, und die Aneignung von 'Wien um 1900' als Teil der heutigen österreichischen Identität würde immer (von außen und von innen) scheel angesehen werden, und das mit Recht. Wenn man jedoch dieses Erbe ehrlich annehmen will, muß man sehen, daß 'Wien um 1900' auch österreichisch war, nicht *obwohl*, sondern *weil* es eine 'jüdische Stadt' war. Auf diesem Weg aber ware Österreich viel mehr als nur die jetzige Bevölkerung der Republik, es würde auch die Vertriebenen und ihre Erben einschließen in die österreichische Geschichte, aber auch in das jetzige österreichische Selbstverständnis.[71]

Gombrich, of course, had no need 'ins Reine zu kommen' with regard to the Austrian culpability for Nazi actions, and he seems to have felt no drive to take up cudgels against Austria's limited *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or coming to terms with the past. As an émigré scholar, he had effectively abandoned national identity in favour of cosmopolitanism.

Gombrich's description of the scholarly vocation as bearing a 'character indelibilis' helps here to explain the value of *Bildungskultur* in giving an enduring, stable, and transnational identity to the émigré or exile scholar.[72] The legacy of *Bildung* permeates the work of many émigrés. I have discussed how the key link in the

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[69] Beller, 'Was bedeutet es', p. 274.
[70] Ibid., p. 279.
[71] Ibid., pp. 279-280.
[72] See 2.1 above.

relationship between Gombrich's Vienna and that of his Schubert *homage* is undoubtedly *Bildung* with its élitist cultural standards, its secularism, and its cult of friendship.[73] Popper's biographer Hacohen makes a strong case for Popper's philosophy as 'a metamorphosis of Viennese progressivism'.[74] Daniel Snowman's comments conjure *Bildungskultur* when he writes of the wider circle of 'Hitler émigrés' that their

> cultural references are significant. Again and again, it is music, art, literature, that people, later émigrés from Hitler, mentioned when reflecting upon what had made them and their families so proudly German. This is the case not just for German nationals but for people from all over German-speaking central Europe. Nor was the culture that they admired and imbibed exclusively German but included a knowledge of languages (ancient and modern), of the fine arts – and a willingness to cross artistic boundaries.[75]

Even half a century after his emigration, when Gombrich was making proposals for the ideal education system in Britain in the 1980s, *Bildungskultur* was evident. The proposals recommend learning of classical languages, devotion to study over paid work, and the crossing of disciplinary boundaries. The poignant language of the proposals seems to evoke the experience of emigration and estrangement from one's homeland, as Gombrich writes that:

> Life, after all, is often sad, and it is barbarous cruelty to want to cut off our young people from this source of strength, from the inspiration they can derive throughout their lives from this vitalising contact with the masterpieces of art, literature, philosophy and music, whatever their future employment or unemployment will demand of them.[76]

The utopian visions of Gombrich's educational ideal perpetuated into the late twentieth century the notion of a *Gelehrtenrepublik* or 'Republic of Learning'. Malachi Haim Hacohen suggests that by the mid-1930s, this ideal of *Bildungskultur* as a

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[73] See 2.2.5 above.
[74] Hacohen, 'Popper's Cosmopolitanism', p. 180.
[75] Snowman, 'The Hitler Émigrés', p. 446.
[76] Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, p. 31.

transnational community of the highly cultured had begun to be deployed by victims of Nazi persecution, figuring 'diaspora as cosmopolitan triumph,' the 'utopian [...] response of a marginal intelligentsia to the ethnonationalism that condemned it to extinction'.[77] The Republic of Letters had a much longer history than this, however, having been a particularly significant feature of German-language intellectual life since the neo-humanism of the early nineteenth century, exemplified by figures like Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835).[78] Regarding German intellectual life in the 1920s and 1930s, Helmut Lethen has argued from the basis of his study of various thinkers' appropriation of a 17th century Jesuit conduct code that humanism allowed for the negotiation of 'cool conduct' between the extremes of alienating individuation and an overpowering, even National Socialist, *Gemeinschaft* or community. For Lethen, '[o]ne of the macabre aspects of German intellectual history is that the avant-garde thinkers began to excavate humanism's buried potential at a time when exile largely deprived them of any possibility for action.'[79] However, for Hacohen the value of *Bildungskultur* lay in its sustenance of the identities and intellectual production of the exile and émigré scholar, rather than necessarily its possibilities as a pragmatic tool for intervention in the political life of the homeland.

In the case of Karl Popper, Hacohen finds his subject using the *Gelehrtenrepublik* to counter ethnonationalism through a cosmopolitan philosophy:

> Threatened by the fascist *Heimat,* Popper contained its political force and emotional appeal first by restricting it to individuals and their environment, then by transforming national collectives into legal associations protecting universal rights [...] National differences appeared insignificant. All nations must

[77] See Hacohen's discussion of the Wiener Kreis luminary Otto Neurath, 1882-1945, and his *International Encyclopaedia of Unified Science.* Hacohen, *Karl Popper,* p. 287.
[78] See W.H. Bruford, *The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation: 'Bildung' from Humboldt to Thomas Mann* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
[79] Helmet Lethen, *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany*, trans. by Don Reneau (Berkeley, CA, Los Angeles et al: University of California Press, 2002), p. 97.

> conform to the legal code of a yet-to-come world federation. [...] Excluded from *Heimat* on ethnic grounds, Popper responded by subjecting ethnic and national identities to a universal humanity.[80]

Malachi Haim Hacohen and Catherine Soussloff have been key commentators on this diasporic 'Central European' identity, which cannot be identified as a Jewish one but only as one available to those persecuted by the Nazis, among whom there numbered many people of Jewish background. This is an important distinction to make in preserving a historical perspective which avoids either accepting the categorisations of the persecutors or the retrospective 'ethnic maximalism' diagnosed by Steinberg. Before directly addressing the archive material which records Gombrich's own experiences in emigration, we turn first to Hacohen and Soussloff for their sensitive explorations of émigrés' cosmopolitan identity and its ramifications.

3.2.2 Identity in emigration: the work of Hacohen and Soussloff

Hacohen builds on his account of humanism in emigration when he discusses Ernst Gombrich in an essay briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, 'Dilemmas of Cosmopolitanism: Karl Popper, Jewish Identity, and "Central European Culture"'.[81] He cites a statement by Gombrich:

> There was and always will be something called the 'Republic of Scholars' [...]We scientists or scholars, *res publica litterarum,* stick together and our home is our work. I do not feel myself an Englishman. I feel myself to be exactly what I am: a Central European who works in England.[82]

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[80] Hacohen, 'Popper's Cosmopolitanism', pp. 182-183.
[81] See 2.2.5 above.
[82] Ernst Gombrich, cited in Hacohen, 'Dilemmas', p. 105.

Suspicious of homogenising notions of *Mitteleuropa*, seeking to focus on particular cosmopolitanisms rather than finding a 'grand pattern for Central Europe',[83] Hacohen chooses to interrogate Gombrich's 'self-identification as both a "Central European" (not an Austrian or Viennese) and a citizen of a timeless and contextless Republic of Letters'.[84] The questions he poses are important and provocative:

> What Central Europe did he imagine when he said, "I feel Central European"? Why did he think of cosmopolitan citizenship as overcoming exile? How did Central Europe and the Republic of Letters both become components of a Viennese émigré's self-proclaimed identity?[85]

Hacohen makes the argument that

> the dilemmas of national integration faced by Central European Jewish intellectuals [...] inspired their utopian visions of a Republic of Letters. An entire generation of émigrés imagined a Central European culture that survived the collapse of Central Europe and continued to exist in exile as a Republic of Scholars.[86]

Although there were real networks of émigré scholars working in association, as discussed by Johannes Feichtinger,[87] it is the sense of imagining which is important here – that this 'Republic of Letters' was also an 'imagined community' (after Benedict Anderson), an identity-giving construct which transcended and enriched the reality of actual social contacts with one's peers in emigration.[88]

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[83] Hacohen, 'Dilemmas', p. 107.
[84] Ibid., p. 105.
[85] Ibid., p. 106.
[86] Ibid., p. 106.
[87] See 1.1 above.
[88] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London and New York: Verso, 1991), pp.1-7.

This Republic, for Hacohen, 'was the clod of native soil that accompanied [émigré scholars] in exile. But, unlike the soil, it expressed homesickness surreptitiously. They conjured the *Heimat* in the image of an unbound republic'.[89]

The complex, cosmopolitan 'Central European identity' identified by Hacohen, and taken up here, is distinct from notions of the 'secular' or 'psychological' Jew which might mistakenly be applied to the émigré generation.

The 'psychological Jew' is Philip Rieff's concept, positing a specifically Jewish mentality and even 'family romance' in the psychoanalytic sense. Freud, for Rieff, is the 'psychological Jew' *par excellence*:

> His is the familiar story of the European Jewish intellectual. His friends were all Jews, his patients mostly so; his private culture – jokes and family sentiment – exemplify[ies] a Jewishness more binding than religious orthodoxy. Even some of the neurotic traits in Freud's character point to his origins in Eastern European Jewry; for example, that obsessive anxiety for the health of wife and children which is a common by-product of the Jewish son's close and persistent bond with his mother [...] However little nostalgia he harboured for Jewish ceremonies or custom, Freud did acknowledge himself as a psychological Jew – and indeed he had many of the rigidities of that curious and heroic type in late European history.[90]

It should be evident that Rieff's concept in many ways is a stereotyping and generalising one. Even leaving aside non-Jewish émigrés like Hayek, to whom we return below, it runs closer to the philo-Semitic 'ethnic maximalism' widely criticized in studies of Central European intellectual history than Hacohen's careful analysis of emigration's legacies.

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[89] Hacohen, 'Dilemmas', p. 149.
[90] Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1960), p. 258.

A more complex and well-known figuration of secular Jewish identity is that coined by Isaac Deutcher, the 'non-Jewish Jew'. The term originates in an essay on unconventional Jewish thinkers. Deutscher traces a tradition beginning with the heretic Elisha ben Abiyuh or 'Akher', who had taught the orthodox Rabbi Meir, and including 'those great revolutionaries of modern thought: Spinoza, Heine, Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky and Freud'.[91] Deutscher explains, 'The Jewish heretic who transcends Jewry belong to a Jewish tradition.'[92]

Deutscher's essay, which remains firmly tied to a religious or cultural conception of Judaism rather than the ethnonationalist one associated with nineteenth- and twentieth-century persecutions, generalizes across huge differences of historical context, so that a straightforward commonality is established. Deutscher claims that his 'non-Jewish Jews' 'in some ways [...] were very Jewish indeed. They had in themselves something of the quintessence of Jewish life and of the Jewish intellect',[93] even as he acknowledges that:

> Rosa Luxemburg is a unique blend of the German, Polish, and Russian characters and of the Jewish temperament; Trotsky was the pupil of a Lutheran Russo-German gymnasium in cosmopolitan Odessa on the fringe of the Greek-Orthodox Empire of the Tsars; and Freud's mind matured in Vienna in estrangement from Jewry and in opposition to the Catholic clericalism of the Habsburg capital.[94]

Deutscher insists that these figures

> were *a priori* exceptional in that as Jews they dwelt on the borderlines of various civilizations, religions, and national cultures [...] Each of them was in society and yet not in it, of it and yet not of it. It was this that enabled them to rise in

[91] Isaac Deutscher, 'The non-Jewish Jew', in *The non-Jewish Jew and other essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 25-41 (p.26).
[92] Ibid., p.26.
[93] Ibid., p. 27.
[94] Ibid., p. 30.

> thought above their societies, above their nations, above their times and generations, and to strike out mentally into wide new horizons and far into the future.[95]

From these shared circumstances, Deutscher explains, these diverse figures developed a noble belief in the universality and solidarity of humankind and a certain philosophical determinism 'because having watched many societies and studied many 'ways of life' at close quarters, they grasp the basic regularities of life'.[96]

'Central Europeanness' cannot be assimilated to Deutscher's concept without much damage to its value as an intellectual tool. The same is true for Gilman's 'Jewish self-hatred'.[97] 'Central Europeans' in Hacohen's formulation need not be Jews, 'non-Jewish', 'psychological', 'self-hating' or of any other type. Rather than being a Jewish identity which had secularized any trace of its religious inheritance, 'Central Europeanness' represents an identity which is not necessarily Jewish, and which can only be defined as Jewish *ex negativo*, as a result of Nazi and wider ethnonationalist persecutions. Friedrich von Hayek is a useful figure for discussion in this regard. In 1932, before even the Nazi rise to power in Germany, he had taken up a professorship in Statistics and Economic Science at the London School of Economics.[98] He saw this not as an emigration but as a career move which political events transformed into an exile by making his homeland an uncongenial place to live.[99] Hayek swiftly became committed to the cause of refugee aid for academics and would return to Austria in 1938 on a temporary basis for a fact-finding mission on the position of Austrian scholars.[100] A non-Jew, he nonetheless exhibits traits which we might find in Popper and Gombrich and might call 'Central European': a commitment to liberalism,

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[95] Ibid., p. 27.
[96] Ibid., p.35.
[97] See 3.1.1 above.
[98] Feichtinger, p. 200.
[99] *Hayek on Hayek*, p. 72.
[100] Feichtinger, p. 201.

universalism and the scholarly values of *Bildung*, a complex relationship between life and scholarship, and a certain nostalgia for homeland garbed in intellectual cosmopolitanism.[101] Émigrés like Hayek also faced challenges in emigration; the marginality which Deutscher ascribes to Jews was to some extent a characteristic of all émigrés in British society, by virtue of their circumstances as immigrants and later as 'enemy aliens'.

Although we must acknowledge the vast proportion of émigrés who had some sort of Jewish background, whether self-acknowledged or imposed by the persecutors, it is perhaps more useful for the present thesis on the intellectual history of the emigration to examine those who left Central Europe as émigrés first and foremost, rather than yoking them, as Deutscher would have us, to a specifically Jewish tradition traced back as far as Akher. In any case, Deutscher's thesis is connected to an agenda born of his own mid-twentieth-century context and particularly the founding of the state of Israel. This is clearest when he comments that the tradition of 'non-Jewish Jews' is at risk when 'the world has compelled the Jew to embrace the nation-state and to make of it his [*sic*] pride and hope just at a time when there is little or no hope left in it.'[102]

More useful, perhaps, for the current thesis – and indeed, any raising of the question of ethnic identity in the current discussion of Hacohen's 'Central Europeanness' – is the work of historian Catherine M. Soussloff. Hacohen's image of the ethnically unmarked 'Republic of Letters' and of a related 'Central European'

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[101] On the relationship between life and scholarship, see Stephen Kresge, 'Introduction', in *Hayek on Hayek: An Autobiographical Dialogue*, ed. by Stephen Kresge and Leif Wenar (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1-35 (pp. 22-33) and also *Hayek on Hayek*, pp. 128-130. Hayek had divorced his wife to marry a beloved cousin; in 1954, Hayek and his new wife retraced the hundred-year-old steps of John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, on whom Hayek had previously written, through Italy and Greece. On nostalgia for the homeland and its relationship to cosmopolitanism, see Kresge's discussion of Hayek's abortive 1960s attempt to create an 'Institute for Advanced Studies' in the Austrian capital (Kresge, p. 29). As Kresge rather poignantly puts it, 'Needless to say, it did not recreate the lost Vienna.'

[102] Deutscher, p. 41.

identity speaks to Soussloff's analysis of the *aporia* that could be left in the intellectual history of a discipline when its émigré practitioners 'wanted to avoid the notion that their religion or ethnicity had anything to do' with their work.[103]

Soussloff pursues 'a historiography peculiar to art history', claiming that this peculiarity exists

> [b]ecause National Socialist policy towards the Jews in Germany and Austria hit German art history particularly hard relative to other disciplines or, to put it another way, because most of the fortunate art historians who made their way to America because of that policy were Jews[.][104]

However, her comments seem to address the project of the political philosopher Popper as much as the art historian Gombrich when she writes:

> Any topic or method that ostensibly approached issues related to Jewishness or Jewish identity could not be consciously or overtly dealt with [...] This is not simply a biographical issue related directly and only to the experiences of particular individuals, although these experiences should be remembered and respected. The subjectivity of the interpreter bears upon the written record itself, that is, what the historian has written, and upon the subsequent history of that writing in citation and in the practices of scholarship and art criticism, where identity and historiography converge and become manifest as discourse.[105]

Soussloff emphasizes the impact on intellectual history of emotional concerns attached to one's sense of one's own ethnicity and specifically addresses the case of Jewish identity in the mid-twentieth century. Her comments on the issue of biography demonstrate a respect for the individual historical agent which, rather than attempting to 'expose as Jews' the likes of Gombrich and Popper or to bind them to a specific tradition, recognizes that 'at the deep level, below the biographical surface of an

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[103] Catherine M. Soussloff, 'Introducing Jewish Identity to Art History', in *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History*, ed. by Catherine M. Soussloff (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 1-16 (p. 2).
[104] Ibid., p. 2.
[105] Ibid., p. 2.

individual's existence, lie the resonances with the "facts" of a life that constitute an identity'[106] – in short, those dynamics of historical context, ethnic and personal identity which we address here. The 'Republic of Letters' was a convenient edifice behind which those who 'wanted to avoid the notion that their religion or ethnicity had anything to do' with their scholarship might retreat – this despite the fact that, as Keith Moxey points out in his discussion of Erwin Panofsky's case,

> A failure to discuss the specific experiences of ethnic, religious, and gendered minorities on the grounds that reference to such groups constitutes a manifestation of the very feelings that subordinate them refuses to come to grips with the heterogeneity of our culture. Only by recognising the extent to which dominant and hegemonic values represent megalomaniacal and unrealisable dreams of ethnic, religious, national, or gendered unity, can we appreciate the extent to which such values are constructed fabrications that may be challenged and changed by those whom they have historically excluded and those whom they have traditionally favoured.[107]

As Louis Rose has pointed out, the humanism of these cosmopolitan émigré scholars could serve as a powerful antifascist intellectual tool.[108] This tool served again as a defence against the perceived threat of 'totalitarianism' in the postwar period – see, for example, Gombrich's comments on Hegel.[109]

However, Popper and Gombrich's postwar invocations of a Republic of Letters also serve and perpetuate the occlusion of identities identified by Moxey, Hacohen and Soussloff. This is occlusion also of the extent to which the humanist ideals of *Bildung* had become ethnically marked in the German-speaking lands through their marginalisation by nationalist and racist forces. Rather than confront the Central

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[106] Ibid., p. 4.
[107] Moxey, p. 67.
[108] See Louis Rose, 'Interpreting Propaganda: Successors to Warburg and Freud in Wartime', *American Imago*, 60 (2003), 122-130. Gombrich briefly discusses the application of his scholarly approach to antifascist activity – specifically, the interpretation of Nazi propaganda – in E.H. Gombrich, *Myth and Reality in German War-Time Broadcasts* (London: Athlone, 1970).
[109] See 2.2.3.1 above.

European ethnonationalism that had become their persecutor, these heirs to *Bildung* aimed to transcend it by devoting themselves to a perceived higher plane of authority: Enlightenment universalism. Gombrich might be able to acknowledge the 'clod of native soil' he carried with him in the form of the German language and its personal significance – 'It's like retaining an accent: you remain what...remain what you are'[110] – and could even state, "I have not the slightest wish to deny or to conceal my Jewish origins',[111] but he would not examine this concept any more profoundly or critically.

For such émigrés to present their cultural background as *gebildete Menschen* of early twentieth-century Vienna as an ethnically marked one would not only have contradicted their intellectual values, but would also have assaulted a sense of self profoundly and emotively bound up in those values. When postwar scholars investigated the Jewish contribution to Vienna at the turn of the century, or attempted to trace lineages back from this milieu not solely to Goethe and the classical tradition, but the Jewish experience in Europe, Gombrich and Popper would become highly defensive. This emotional concern underpins the character of Gombrich's strident 1996 paper, where the *Gebildete*'s identity is protected by denigrating that of the 'ghetto Jew'.

The vehemence with which these émigrés denied notions of a 'Jewish influence' on their lives and works reflected their rejection of racism, but also their successful assimilation away from the Jewish cultural identity of their parents. Their own concerns and dispositions did not admit a lineage from Jewish emancipation, but only one proceeding from the Enlightenment promise of a universal justice and progress available to every human being. As the historian Marsha L. Rozenblit has written of

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[110] IWM 4521/03/01-03.
[111] Ernst Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 28.

Austrian Jewish assimilation, 'most converts, or at least their offspring, probably did assimilate fully into Viennese society, even if that was not their original intention'.[112] Gombrich and Popper both belonged to that second generation of assimilated Jews, the offspring of converts. In her book *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity,* Rozenblit explains that

> Through intermarriage and through the formal act of converting from Judaism, some Viennese Jews declared that they were no longer tied to the history and destiny of Jewish people, that they desired total incorporation into the society in which they lived. [...] The Jewish apostate expected that by renouncing Judaism and embracing Christianity he [*sic*] would become a fully accepted member of the majority. Generally this expectation was realistic. Until racial antisemitism provided a nearly insurmountable obstacle to Jewish assimilation, the gentile world willingly accepted the baptised Jew as an equal.[113]

At the same time, Rozenblit's claims should be tempered with Steven Beller's examination of accounts by assimilated Jews of their situation in the Vienna of the early twentieth century. Beller finds that

> [m]any witnesses claim that they were never conscious of being Jewish to the extent of not even denying it [...] However, when many of the claims to a lack of Jewish consciousness are put under close inspection, it often turns out that these statements have been misunderstood, or that, within context, they actually reveal some sort of implicit Jewish self-consciousness [...] The statement about not being regarded as Jewish is actually an admission of pride in not being taken for a Jew. [...] The irony of this is that it is a uniquely Jewish experience, for it makes no sense to talk about the pride of a person not of Jewish descent in not being regarded as Jewish[.][114]

However, just as Beller's research checks Rozenblit's, his own must be qualified in turn. The fact that Beller draws on memoirs produced after the onset of National Socialism means that his sources' accounts may be affected by the changed

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[112] Marsha L. Rozenblit, 'Jewish Assimilation in Habsburg Vienna' in *Assimilation and Community*, pp. 225-245 (p. 237).
[113] Marsha L. Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), p. 127.
[114] Beller, *Vienna and the Jews*, pp. 74-76.

circumstances that followed racial persecution. The pride at not being taken for a Jew may not belong to the assimilated Jews of 'Vienna 1900', but rather those who survived or fled Nazism, now projecting their post-National Socialist concerns onto the accounts Beller reads for their historical content.

These numerous qualifications and ambivalences indicate the still tenuous and contested state of research into the Austrian Jewish assimilation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but this does not justify the outright dismissal of the field which Gombrich sought to bring about in his 1996 lecture. For Gombrich and his peers, Jewishness was not far distant but only a generation, at the most two, in the past – and a subject, as the archive reveals to us, far from unknown in their daily lives.

3.3. 'Jewishness' in the archive correspondence

For all that the researches of Beller, Rozenblit and others alert us to the subtleties and shadings of Jewish self-awareness among Gombrich's generation and its predecessors, archival correspondence and other primary materials indicate that Jewish identity was an issue of which the humanist émigré scholars of the 1930s were well aware, and which they discussed not only tacitly but explicitly. Comments by Hayek himself, interviewed late in his life, indicate that even amongst fully paid-up Viennese *Gelehrte* before the emigration there was an awareness of Jewish 'difference', although we must remember that these remarks are subject to the same questions Beller raised with regard to post-1933 Jewish memoirs. Hayek would explain that 'the Vienna of the 1920s and 1930s is not intelligible without the Jewish problem', meaning the challenge of

negotiating Jewish and non-Jewish identities; that 'there was a certain amount of speculation in the Jewish community' about whether Hayek himself was of Jewish background; and that although his friends were a mixed group of Jews and non-Jews, 'it would have been bitterly resented' had he, as a non-Jew, joined in Jewish friends' comments about Jewish accents and habits.[115]

Studying archived materials from the 1930s helps us refine our account of the negotiations surrounding Jewish and 'Central European' identities in the emigration, attending closely to specific émigré lives and drawing on primary sources from the moment of emigration itself.

Hacohen's own essay approaches its principal subject, Karl Popper, in depth and from various perspectives: as a victim of ethnonationalist tendencies; as a member of a progressive Jewish intelligentsia; in terms of his work on the Vienna Circle and *The Open Society*; and as a commentator on what is sometimes known as 'the Jewish Question'. Gombrich, whose use of the term 'Central European' launches Hacohen's discussion, does not make a reappearance until the essay's very last paragraph, where it is claimed that 'Gombrich, Popper and other émigrés were as rooted in Vienna as all expatriates in their homelands'.[116]

Hacohen's essay is an important one in the intellectual history of the German-Jewish emigration, but by invoking Gombrich's comments on 'Central Europe' without attending to his scholarship and career, Hacohen risks subsuming Gombrich and unnamed 'other émigrés' to a new 'grand pattern' which homogenizes the exile experience based on the template of Karl Popper's life and work.

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[115] *Hayek on Hayek*, pp. 59-61.
[116] Hacohen, 'Dilemmas', p. 149.

Materials from the archive of the Warburg Institute which employed Gombrich from 1936, and from the correspondence of Gombrich's mentor Ernst Kris, enrich an account of Gombrich as émigré by indicating that an awareness of Jewish 'difference' was positively commonplace in his social world. It existed in the agendas of academic institutions and the private discussions of their staff; between friends and colleagues it appeared as a source of dark humour or as an explicitly articulated sense of anxiety and dread. Evidence suggests that the postwar, cosmopolitan, humanist Gombrich, who in 1996 dismissed Jewish cultural identity as an irrelevant issue, had been forged with no small anguish and with significant discussion of 'Jewishness'. Investigating that evidence begins the business of understanding the individual case of Gombrich's self-fashioning as an ethnically unmarked 'Central European scholar'.

3.3.1 Correspondence from the Warburg Institute Archive

In the year that Gombrich began work for the Warburg Institute in London, Ernst Kris wrote a report for Britain's Academic Assistance Council (forerunner of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning) on the situation of scholars of Jewish background in Austria. Gombrich, recalling the time in his 1979 Imperial War Museum interview, described Kris as a politically aware figure, who 'read the [Nazi newspaper] *Völkischer Beobachter* [and...] knew what was coming'[117] – but Kris' report is a far more clear-cut study of Viennese anti-Semitism past, present and future

[117] IWM 4521/03/01-03.

than Gombrich's aside admits.[118] Kris' report was not restricted to the Academic Assistance Council: in a letter dated 22 October 1936, he wrote up the material for the then-director of the Warburg Institute, Fritz Saxl.

In this letter, Kris gives three examples of 'einer systematischen Ausschaltung der Juden aus allen akademischen und wissenschaftlichen Stellen'.[119] The cases of Karl Popper, philosopher Friedrich Waismann (1896-1959) and physicist Franz Urbach (1902-1969) are not cited as representative of a massive wave of anti-Semitic persecution in the academy.[120] Rather, it is the case that

> Die Eigentümlichkeit dieser Fälle liegt hier darin, dass die Betroffenen es noch zur vollen Entfaltung ihrer wissenschaftlichen Persönlichkeit bringen konnten, aber davon schlagartig durch Zeitumstände daran gehindert worden sind, ihren wissenschaftlichen Lebensweg anzutreten. Ich meine nun, dass diese Fälle von einem dringlichen Charakter sind und für eine so imponierende Analogie zu den deutschen Verhältnissen sprechen, dass es sinnvoll wäre, die Hilfsaktion, die für vertriebene deutsche Gelehrte durchgeführt wird, auch auf sie zu erstrecken.[121]

To write, two years before the Nazi annexation of Austria, of rising discrimination against Jewish academics, not casual but systematic and even paralleling that existing in Germany, casts doubt upon Gombrich's claims about life for the Jewish *Bildungsbürgertum* in Vienna before exile, particularly that 'before the advent of official antisemitism in intellectual, academic circles these were not very great issues'.[122] This is especially so when Kris traces the Austrian predicament back half a century, to before the rise of the Nazis and even before the *fin-de-siècle*: 'Der seit den

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[118] The report is discussed, from a broad perspective on the scholarly emigration of the 1930s, in Feichtinger, pp. 148-156. Note that, despite Kris' report, as late as March 1938 SPSL Director Walter Adams found it 'not yet in the least clear how far the Society will be able to give any help to the scholars who are being dismissed and will be dismissed in Austria.' (SPSL, 187/3, fol. 242, Walter Adams to Gertrud Bing, 18 March 1938).

[119] WIA, General Correspondence (GC), Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (KHM), Ernst Kris to Fritz Saxl, 22 October 1936.

[120] On Waismann and Urbach, see Feichtinger, pp. 174-77 and 170-172 respectively.

[121] WIA, General Correspondence (GC), Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (KHM), Ernst Kris to Fritz Saxl, 22 October 1936.

[122] IWM 4521/03/01-03.

Achtzigerjahren herrschende Antisemitismus hat sich seit etwa zwölf Jahren in Oesterreich [...] ausserordentlich verstärkt.'[123]

Jewish identity could remain an issue for individuals and institutions even once they had escaped the persecution of their homelands. Although the Warburg Institute had departed the German-speaking lands in 1933 for the congenial shelter of a site on Millbank provided by the University of London, its fate remained precarious throughout the 1930s, and was no less bound up in the perceived Jewishness of its staff and the banking family who sponsored it, as correspondence between family members and Institute staff indicates.[124]

In October 1934, Edward Warburg (1908-1992), nephew of Aby, had written to 'Professor Sachsel':

> In the back of my father's mind, and mine, lies the dominant hope of seeing the Warburg Library somewhere here in America. [...] What we are most concerned with is the efficiency of the Warburg Library; that it should serve its purpose in the best possible surroundings and under the best auspices. Needless to say we are extremely grateful to the gentlemen in England who were instrumental in moving the Library out of Germany in these difficult times. Their kindness and far-sightedness in shouldering such a responsibility most certainly deserves the highest commendation. But the question is – and that is the reason for this letter – whether the Library should, ideally speaking, and with Germany out of the picture entirely, be located in London. I feel more than ever that the Warburg Library is going to be one of the most vital factors in the development of the art studies of our generation. Being an American as well as a Warburg, I naturally have strong hopes of seeing it here in America. I feel that the students and scholars over here are better fitted to receive the maximum benefit from such a Library.[125]

Warburg Director Fritz Saxl's response of 8 November 1934 was polite but saw

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[123] WIA, GC, KHM, Ernst Kris to Fritz Saxl, 22 October 1936.
[124] On the Institute in emigration, see Dieter Wuttke, 'Die Emigration der Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg und die Anfrange des Universitätsfaches Kunstgeschichte in Grossbritannien' in *Aby Warburg: Akten des internationalen Symposions, Hamburg 1990*, ed. by Horst Bredekamp, Michael Diers and Charlotte Schoell-Glass (Weinheim: VCH and Acta Humaniora, 1991), pp. 141-163.
[125] WIA, GC, Edward Warburg, Edward Warburg to Fritz Saxl, 2 October 1934.

'serious objections to our discussing any plans of moving the Library to America behind the backs of those Englishmen from whom we received the heartiest welcome and the most cordia[l] promotion'.[126] He emphasized the progress of art historical scholarship in the United Kingdom, writing

> You know, of course, that the study of art history is far more developed in America than it is over here. But the establishing of the Courtauld Institute as the first University art historical one in England, the installation of a chair for Art History at Cambridge as well as Birmingham, the appointment of a man like Kenneth Clark who is a scholar more than an expert as the Director of the National Gallery seem to indicate that the interest in art history is making great progress in this country. The introduction of the methods of the Warburg Institute into English University life at this precise moment is sure to be very favourable for our aims and purposes. The English temperament, it is true, is slow and the reputation of the Warburg Institute will perhaps be more slowly spread in England than it would do in America. But as far as we can judge from the short time we have been here it is making steady progress.[127]

Saxl emphasized the interest shown in the Institute by English readers, higher education institutions, the staff of the British Museum and editors of academic publications.[128] Where Edward had suggested the Institute should be incorporated into

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[126] WIA, GC, Edward Warburg, Fritz Saxl to Edward Warburg, 8 November 1934.
[127] Ibid.
[128] In this regard see also Gertrud Bing's letter to Felix Warburg of 26 September 1934, in which she enclosed an article from The Library Association Record:

> It seems that several people who came here during the last days had read it and that it helped them to understand the aims and methods of the Institute.
>
> Altogether I may say that the interest for the Institute is continually growing. An increasing number of English scholars are using it and the fact that readers not only find here certain subjects of their researches represented in a completeness generally surpassing that of other libraries but that they also have free access to it is generally appreciated.
> (WIA, GC, Felix Warburg, Gertrud Bing to Felix Warburg, 26 September 1934).

This letter seems to have been written in response to Felix Warburg's request to Saxl of May 1934: 'I hope that by this time you are comfortably installed in the Library's London quarters and I would be very glad to hear how the English public takes to it and what sort of students you reach.' (WIA, GC, Felix Warburg, Felix Warburg to Fritz Saxl, 10th May 1934). It is important, however, to note that when Edward wrote to Saxl in October 1934, he declared that although he had discussed the matter of a move to America with Felix and Erich Warburg, his letter was confidential, and Felix's request need not have been directly linked to the planned transatlantic transfer. Bing continued to send material demonstrating the London-based Institute's increasing renown. In March 1936 she sent Felix a copy of *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, containing an article on the Institute:

> The author is not personally known to us so his article is a very fair sign that the activities of the Institute are getting better known also in France. We have since received several requests for our publications, and have also received other compliments on the strength of this article.
> (WIA, GC, Felix Warburg, Gertrud Bing to Felix Warburg, 26 March 1936).

the Morgan Library, possibly in conjunction with 'Metropolitan, New York University or Columbia',[129] Saxl preferred 'close collaboration with those New York institutions of which you speak',[130] although he was careful to emphasize that his letter did 'not mean to say that we are not intensively interested in all your plans more especially those which tend to bring the Library into closer contact with America'.[131] At the end of the year, in strictest confidence, he informed Kris that

> Der amerikanische Teil der [Warburg] Familie steht mit Recht oder Unrecht auf dem Standpunkt, dass er ungern Geld nach London schickt, wo er doch dasselbe Geld in Amerika ausgeben könnte und dafür zumindest Bewunderung erbte. Daher die Tendenz, uns entweder nach Amerika zu ziehen wogegen ich mich st[e]mme, oder uns kein Geld zu geben.[132]

When in early 1935 another Warburg nephew, Erich (sometimes 'Eric') (1900-1990), visited London, he attended meetings on the future location of the Institute. Suggestions of a move to America seem to have unsettled senior British academics. Erich Warburg saw his main duty as 'pacifying the troubled waters with regard to the Warburg Library',[133] and proved sympathetic to the predicament of Saxl and his colleagues. He wrote to his brother Edward with an assessment of the British 'mood':

> [T]hey would not mind at all if the Library went to America, but the impression this would create in this country would be awful. I do not exaggerate this point, and I feel it very strongly, not only as a member of our family but also as a Jew that we cannot allow anything to happen which could be interpreted as a blot on our escutcheon.[134]

Senior family member Felix Warburg (1871-1937) was at this time significantly involved in the issues and debates surrounding Zionism and the British authority in

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[129] WIA, GC, Edward Warburg, Edward Warburg to Fritz Saxl, 2 October 1934.
[130] WIA, GC, Edward Warburg, Fritz Saxl to Edward Warburg, 8 November 1934.
[131] Ibid.
[132] WIA, GC, KHM, Fritz Saxl to Ernst Kris, 29 December 1934.
[133] WIA, GC, Erich M. Warburg, Erich M. Warburg to Edward Warburg, 8 February 1935.
[134] Ibid.

Palestine. To an extent Erich Warburg's comment can be seen as a pragmatic manifestation of *realpolitik*, weighing up the effect the Library's move might have on Felix's interests in the Middle Eastern political situation. However, and especially given Erich's phrasing, this does not entirely exclude the suggestion that he was troubled about the wider implications for Jewish people should the Warburg Institute and its financial backers be seen to be disfavouring the British.[135]

If the Warburg family were intent on protecting their profile and that of Jews in the United Kingdom, there was also feeling – on Saxl's part – for the plight of Jewish people in Central Europe. In January 1936, the month Gombrich arrived in London, Saxl wrote to Felix Warburg, father of Erich and Edward, suggesting three points as a broad basis for negotiation on the Institute's future:

> 1.) that the Warburg Institute should be internationalized,
> 2.) that the sums offered by Mr. Percy Strauss should be used exclusively for establishing the American branch,
> 3.) that the new organisation should be devised in such a way as to profit from but not to destroy the work and capital invested in England.[136]

These apparently general points gain added weight when Saxl glosses the third of them:

> The last point is important with regard to the Jewish Refugee problem among European scholars. I should like to add – I hope you will forgive this remark – that I am very seriously concerned with this particular point [....] Since I know from all you have done for the Jewry of the world how very central this question is to your thinking and feeling I have no doubt that we could easily understand each other in this point also and see the problem in the same light and the same proportions.[137]

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[135] The Warburg family's complex relationship to Zionism is discussed at length in Ron Chernow, *The Warburgs* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993). Felix Warburg, in his aspects as patron of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem but also critic of Zionism, is selected for discussion in depth in David Farrer, *The Warburgs* (London: Michael Joseph, 1974), pp. 93-108.
[136] WIA, GC, Felix Warburg, Fritz Saxl to Felix Warburg, 20 January 1936.
[137] Ibid.

Clearly the issue of Jewishness was far from dead for the Warburg Institute circle at this time. Dorothea McEwan has written of Gertrud Bing in the 1930s that she

> spoke up for German scholarship, regardless whether it was Jewish or Aryan, realising that philo-semitism was another form of discrimination. True, it was not as damaging as anti-semitism, but people in her situation, with her experience of being uprooted, had to be the ones who could openly say any form of discrimination was to be avoided.[138]

However, Saxl clearly saw the Institute as having a role to play specifically with regard to aid for Jewish refugees, and the need to manage the public perception of Jews did, as we have seen, also affect the decision to keep the Institute in London. Indeed, the material McEwan cites in her study of Bing, a letter of 27 January 1936, sent from Gertrud Bing to Esther 'Tess' Simpson (1903-1996) of the Academic Assistance Council, admits of an alternative interpretation. In that interpretation, Bing's main priority is the minimising of publicity for writers' Jewish backgrounds. Although Bing's letter calls for 'an unbiassed [*sic*] picture of the standing of the German historiography' and says it would be 'very dangerous, to say the least, to presume that the whole [of] German modern literature is represented by' Jewish exiles, she concludes that 'in the present situation it would be most dangerous to publish a list of German books which could not be looked upon as impartial'.[139] She claims this conclusion is shared by her Warburg Institute colleagues. Similarly telling are Bing's comments, in the same letter, on the lists of new German literature published in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*:

> The new list of novels contains almost entirely works of [J]ewish authors, who have left Germany, and are forced to publish their works through firms established for this purpose. You know, of course, that an entire "Emigrantenpresse" has sprung up these last two years, which is not confined to

[138] Dorothea McEwan, 'A Tale of One Institute and Two Cities: The Warburg Insitute' in *German-Speaking Exiles in Great Britain*, pp. 25-42 (p. 33).
[139] Ibid., pp. 32-33.

> daily or weekly papers but also comprises novels and poetry. This "Emigrantenpresse" is, quite justly, attacked by a part of the remaining press, and there are few things which, in my opinion, are so apt to create anti-semitism, even in those places where up to now it has been unknown, as this phenomenon.[140]

Bing's intent here seems to be combat ethnonationalism by resisting the creation of a visible 'Jewish' cultural and intellectual grouping in emigration, but this intent can also be seen as an infant sibling to the concerns which later animated Popper and Gombrich's increasingly vehement and questionable scholarly evasion of ethnopolitics.

Gombrich may not have been aware of the part the public image of Jews played in the negotiations over the Warburg Institute's future.[141] However, as we move from the Institute's general correspondence to letters specifically addressed to or from Gombrich, we find that even more substantial references to the position of Jewish scholars in this period exist in the correspondence between Gombrich and Bing, who served as his primary contact at the Institute.

Bing and Gombrich wrote to one another on a regular basis throughout the 1930s. They often wrote in English, although it is not clear whether this was done to practice their language skills or for some other reason, such as not provoking anti-German sentiment in any third-party readers. They discussed Institute and family

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[140] Ibid., p. 32.

[141] On 25 November 1936 Gertrud Bing wrote to Gombrich informing him

> dass es wirklich geglückt ist, in New York ein Schwesterinstitut zu unserem zu gründen, das den Namen A. Warburg Memorial Foundation tragen wird. Wir wollen zunächst eine Bibliothek von 20.000 Bänden zusammenstellen, was mehr Arbeit als Vergnügen machen wird. Aber dann ist ein Austausch von Lehrern und Schülern zwischen den beiden Instituten in Aussicht genommen, der, wenn er funktioniert, zu sehr guten Ergebnissen führen kann. Ich kann Ihnen verraten, dass Ihr Name in dieser Beziehung schon genannt wurde. (Ihre Frau könnte ja in der Zeit eine Konzert Tournée geben).
> (WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Gertrud Bing to Ernst Gombrich, 25 November 1936).

This appears to be the only reference to the planned move in Gombrich's papers at the Warburg Archive – aside from a comment that 'Unser Bleiben hier für die nächsten sieben Jahre nun endgültig gesichert ist' in a letter of 3 September 1936 (WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Gertrud Bing to Ernst Gombrich, 3 September 1936).

gossip, financial and administrative matters, and the work on the Warburg *Nachlass* for which Gombrich had been recruited. Amongst these letters, however, certain items stand out which articulate deep anxieties over the émigrés' predicament as strangers in a land hostile to their country of origin.

A letter from Gombrich to Bing, dated September 14 1939, eleven days after the declaration of war, is one of the most forceful examples of such writing. It contains an uncharacteristically emotive and despairing passage. Although Gombrich maintains the controlled style familiar to us from his scholarship, there is nonetheless a sense of incredulity, tinged with despair, which bears similarities to the existential horror experienced by Jean Améry under the Nazi regime:

> That the Warburg Institute should actually be moved away again belongs to the many things which one might know today without being quite able to realise them. On the other hand the atmosphere of the reading room belonged so intimately to peace and everything it implies that it might have been difficult mentally to adjust it to 'war-conditions'. I find it difficult in any case. If one accepts it as inevitable – as surely one must if one wants to survive – all the efforts of the last years seem so utterly futile. I do not mean my private efforts – though I want to pretend that I would not have wanted them to bear some kind of fruit – but the whole story of the last 21 years with all its illusions and incompetence which doom [...] all the years we have lived through to something next to meaningless. Well – I should not bore you with this kind of useless sentimentalities, it seems that one has to pass from reflection to some kind of action and I wish we were given the opportunity to do that step as soon as possible. I could not resist writing to Miss Simpson once more and got the answer that all the forms which we have filled in concerning National Emergency are now in the hands of the Home Office and that we would be circularised as soon as a decision was forthcoming. But I am afraid this might still last a few weeks, do not you think so? But meanwhile everything is in suspense.[142]

Gombrich's letters to Esther Simpson were written out of anxiety over his position as an enemy alien on British soil. He contacted the organisation time and again over the course of 1939, seeking opportunities to aid, and thus consolidate his position

[142] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Ernst Gombrich to Gertrud Bing, 14 September 1939.

with, the government of his host country.[143] On their own initiative, Warburg Institute staff had provided Gombrich with a letter in August 1939, in which the Director and Deputy Director of the Courtauld Institute affirmed that 'we can vouch from our personal knowledge that [Gombrich] is a man of excellent character, who will act with complete loyalty towards England'.[144] Bing sent Gombrich an accompanying note:

> As no[-]one seems to know what may happen when war breaks out, Saxl and I thought that it might be of some convenience to you to have a paper of this kind. It may prove useless, and I hope it will prove unnecessary.[145]

However, Gombrich's anxiety also stemmed from his situation as a person of Jewish background. Writing to Bing on October 8 1939, naïvely imagining an anti-Nazi 'Austrian legion, myself, Kris, Kurz, Pächt, etc. drilling under the command of Dr. Münz (who was an officer during the last war)',[146] Gombrich again expressed his desire to do 'useful work' in the war effort and commented:

> I do not want to pose as a hero but I am afraid for the sake of our future position in this country one has to take every opportunity to serve – not that it helped the

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[143] In fact, Gombrich's concerns began as early as the 'phoney war' of 1938: On 28 September that year Gombrich wrote to the SPSL:

> Among the many things, people are telling each other is also the rumour, that it would be of great advantage in case of war to be registered somewhere so as to facilitate the British authorities the scrutinising of refugees. [...] It is of course not only a question of our personal well-being, which is hardly important at such a moment, but many of us would prefer to serve this country in one way or another instead of being detained and useless. Though I still don't feel a war-like animal you will agree that we simply can not stay aside while the English must fight, without at least trying to do our part. (SPSL, 187/3, fol. 245, Ernst Gombrich to Esther Simpson, 28 September 1938).

Gombrich would write not only on his own behalf but also that of fellow émigré scholars:

> I wish I could be of some use to this country and most willing to do any kind of service which one would permit us to do.
>
> This is not the expression of any bellicose mood – you know me well enough not to suspect that – but one feels that reading the papers and 16th Century humanists is really not enough in these days. Can you advice me and my colleagues what to do? (SPSL, 187/3, fol. 249, Ernst Gombrich to Esther Simspon, April 12 1939).

Similar items from later that year reiterate a willingness to give service: see SPSL, 187/3, fols. 251-252, Ernst Gombrich to Esther Simpson, August 24 1939 and September 7 1939.

[144] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, note dated 29 August 1939 attached to letter, Gertrud Bing to Ernst Gombrich, 31 August 1939.

[145] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Gertrud Bing to Ernst Gombrich, 31 August 1939.

[146] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Ernst Gombrich to Gertrud Bing, 8 October 1939.

> German Jews very much that they had done it but there does not seem to be an alternative[.][147]

Gombrich's letter continues:

> You know me well enough to know that I am pessimistic again and find the outlook for the future in general rather gloomy, for the Jews in particular worse and perhaps what we used to call civilisation worst. Did you notice by the way how the slogan ['Ino talk with Hitler' has receded already? But much as they may wish it they can't go back now.[148]

It is clear that Gombrich was far from confident in either the British commitment to oppose Hitler or the security of Jews should they not be seen at the forefront of patriotic and war-effort activities. His insecurity was not only linked to his position as an 'enemy alien' in Britain, but also as a person of Jewish background, as is particularly clear from the parallel drawn between his outsider status in Britain and that of German Jews under Hitler.

Ultimately, Gombrich would find suitable work as a monitor of German radio broadcasts, based in Evesham.[149] Even as a contributor to the war effort in his host country, he continued to feel insecure:

> My contract with the B.B.C. is on a monthly basis and it stresses of course that it does no[t] mean my joining the staff of the corporation. According to new regulations the H[ome] O[ffice] still examines all the war-service jobs of aliens and I had the pleasure recently of filling in another form with reference[s] and all that. I do not think that they will sack me now but nobody knows anything about the future of this or any other kind of activity. One could certainly imagine the whole staff being substantially reduced in connection with cuts in the budget or a new wave of suspicion against aliens and all that.[150]

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[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] On Gombrich's experiences and life in general at Evesham, see Rainier and Rubinstein.
[150] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Ernst Gombrich to Gertrud Bing, 21 February 1940.

He saw the Warburg Institute as an entity which might continue to support him and his family, should the 'wave of suspicion against aliens and all that' rise again. The same letter of February 1940 asks that Bing preserves a research grant, allocated to Gombrich but as yet unused. Gombrich comments, 'In such an eventuality – which seems by no means phantastic – I would cherish the feeling that I am not directly falling on the hard pavement but that a kind of safety cushion [...] would diminish the impact of the blow.'[151]

Gombrich did not expect to be bankrolled purely on the grounds of his immigration status. He retained a commitment to, and belief in, scholarship, as evidenced by a letter sent to Saxl from Evesham, in which Gombrich describes

> a feeling of nostalgia which always overcomes me when I get in touch with what is for the time being "my past". I even gave a kind of lecture at Evesham – of course – on "Art and Magic" (of all things) and enlightened the attending crowd of monitors, typists and so on as to the waxen-images in St Annunciata in Florence and their connection with the donor[']s portrait, not to forget la pittura infamante and similar hobbies.[152]

Gertrud Bing, meanwhile, kept Gombrich in touch with academia by reporting on everyday events at the Institute, including the weekly seminars which continued during wartime. At one such seminar, Robert Eisler (1882-1949), a KBW-trained economic and religious historian, gave a paper which provoked violent criticism from the art historian Ludwig Münz (1889-1957), another KBW graduate.[153] Bing's comment, 'Poor Eisler, after having escaped from a Nazi concentration camp finds himself torn to pieces by the Jews! In a way, it served him right', indicates the freeness

[151] Ibid.
[152] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Ernst Gombrich to Fritz Saxl, 20 August 1940.
[153] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Gertrud Bing to Ernst Gombrich, 18 January 1940. On Eisler and Münz, see Feichtinger, p. 358.

with which Gombrich's academic circle, under conditions of exile, did make mention of Jewish identity, albeit here in the specific context of post-1933 Nazi persecution.[154]

3.3.2 Correspondence from the Ernst Kris papers

The letters exchanged between Gombrich and Ernst Kris in the immediate postwar period support the material already seen from the Warburg Institute Archive with regard to Gombrich's feelings about his future as an 'alien' in wartime and post-war Britain. While still a monitor of German radio broadcasts in Evesham, the younger scholar writes: 'Much as I live for the job as a "war job" I wonder whether a successful interpretation of Bellini's Bacchanal would not satisfy me more – in peacetime.'[155]

However, he goes on,

> [N]obody knows what the position of aliens will be after the war when these millions of people have to find a new living. I am not very optimistic as far as this problem goes and I think you too should take it into account when making your plans. After all, over there one is an immigrant, which makes quite a lot of difference, though I think that "rebus sic stantibus" I stand quite a good chance of naturalisation here. As I say, it is really so difficult to make any plans particularly not knowing the plans of other people. But after all, first we have to win the war and I have no illusions as to the difficulty of this proposition though I too am less pessimistic than I was.[156]

Similarly, on 16 August 1943 Gombrich writes that

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[154] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Gertrud Bing to Ernst Gombrich, 18 January 1940.
[155] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Ernst Kris, 3 April 1941.
[156] Ibid.

> I myself feel very much out of touch with this whole 'Betrieb' and I very much wonder where I shall drift when this war is over. There is a definite danger of a pseudo fascist reaction here with talk of the kind one hears already 'the foreigners and Jews stayed behind and took all the cushy jobs etc." and though my job is anything but cushy it is difficult for outsiders to see it in this light.[157]

23 September 1945 has Gombrich directing Kris' attention to the British national press, despite Kris being in the United States:

> If you have time to look at the Times of September 4th 1945 you will find there a lovely Paragraph HOUSES OCCUPIED BY REFUGEES. ACCOMODATION NEEDED BY HOMELESS BRITONS. "Many people are concerned at the continued presence in this country of so many foreign refugees..." etc. And this is the Times, not the Daily Mail.[158]

Weighing up the benefits of BBC and Warburg Institute work as 'jobs suitable for an alien', Gombrich noted:

> Among the things in favour of the BBC is the position of aliens in this country. It is likely to be precarious in the period of reconversion and this would be a job where the employment of aliens is specifically provided for (the Labour Ministry ruling is that aliens must not be employed on jobs which can be filled by British people). I do not think that the problem would be serious in the case of a Research Fellowship so intimately connected with the publishing of Warburg's German MS but it may be serious in other respects, (conceivably naturalisation prospects)[.][159]

Gombrich's earlier correspondence had already made mention of the special efforts needed for the Warburg Institute and its émigré scholars to settle into British national culture. He had written to Kris: 'In this respect too you are better off as an immigrant in the USA then we here who are only here on toleration. As you know naturalisation does'nt [*sic*] make any difference here'.[160]

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[157] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 16 August 1943.
[158] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 September 1945.
[159] Ibid.
[160] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 16 August 1943.

Relevant here also are Gombrich's two mentions of Warburg staff member Charles Mitchell – 'muddle-headed and not very intelligent [...] but very English in the best sense which makes him a great asset for this strange and 'alien' Institute'[161] and 'our Parade Englaender, he is a very nice boy'.[162] If we accept Gombrich's description of Mitchell, then it appears that, as in the pre-war period, a need to display a certain level of national loyalty remained evident in the policies of the Warburg Institute.

Clearly a sense of being 'alien' and even homeless continued to weigh on Gombrich's mind, even after the defeat of the Axis powers. If by 1996 these anxieties were no longer explicitly articulated, they clearly still informed his position on that portion of the history of Central Europe which intersected with his own life story.

3.4 Gombrich's 'last word' on Jewish identity

Despite the strident declarations of 1996, there is evidence that even in his later life, Gombrich could still accept that Jewishness had some part to play in his identity, as when he discussed it in his Imperial War Museum interview. Gombrich could also accept that 'when I think about it, I have to admit that the atmosphere of Vienna influenced me in a general way'.[163] However it was difficult for him, as at the Austrian Cultural Institute seminar, to link personal experience, with its attendant emotional concerns, and the wider social questions of the Viennese milieu and Jewish identity,

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[161] Ibid.
[162] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 March 1946.
[163] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 26.

especially in an academic context. For such discussion to be possible, he had to feel himself to be in control of the intellectual debate.

In the published version of his 1996 lecture, Gombrich arranged for the editor, Emil Brix, to include a second text, in which he explains the Jewish experience in Central Europe in terms of social dynamics. This account largely corresponds with that given in the current chapter.[164] Gombrich phrases his thesis in explicitly Popperian terms, claiming the Jews to have been victims of the change from 'closed' societies, authoritarian and restrictive, to 'open' societies better rooted in equality, liberty and rationality. Gombrich suggests that Jews, with their money-lending role, grew to function 'as a capitalist enclave within feudal society'.[165] In the wake of the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, Jews seized opportunities in trade and industry and maintained their ambitions for social advancement. Gombrich writes,

> [W]e may assume that, when members of the aristocracy or of the peasantry gradually woke up to these novel opportunities, they found the lucrative positions already occupied by Jews who had been there first, and who were accordingly hated as intruders: only recently had they been despised – now they were also envied.[166]

The text does not dismiss outright studies in the 'Jewish catastrophe' of Vienna at the *Jahrhundertwende,* as Gombrich's earlier lecture did. Instead, it defuses the issue by rendering it as a debate between social-historical explanations of the Viennese Jewish situation and racist ones, despite the fact that there was no racial argument in either the seminar or the scholarly work to which Beller *et al* were contributing. In this regard, it can be argued that despite the concessions of the second text, Gombrich's position had not changed.

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[164] See 3.2 above.
[165] Gombrich, *Visual Arts in Vienna*, p. 33.
[166] Ibid.,, p. 36.

The second article is written in much less emotive and personal language than the lecture. Gombrich takes a perspective distant enough to encompass all the nation-states of Europe and all of history from the Middle Ages on. In stark contrast to the use of autobiographical accounts in his lecture, Vienna is mentioned only briefly, in the paper's concluding sentences. Both Gombrich's personal experiences and the 'chain of memory' which Gombrich formed in his Schubert lecture and, through Epstein, in his 1996 paper are conspicuously absent. The issue of Jewishness and 'Vienna 1900' could be discussed at a generalized, impersonal level over which he maintained control.

The extent of this need for control is suggested by the second text's mysterious provenance. The article presents itself as being a text based on a second lecture at the same 1996 seminar. Dr. Emil Brix, organizer of the seminar and editor of the published pamphlet, has explained:

> The second text in the booklet is an older article by [Gombrich] to which he agreed that we reprint this text in the booklet. He gave me this article for the booklet, because he felt that this text explains his position in the matter best.[167]

However, Dr. Brix is unable to provide the original source for this second article. J.B. Trapp's *E.H. Gombrich: A Bibliography* considers the second text to be based on a lecture from the 1996 seminar and none of Trapp's entries offer any hint or clue as to the article's origins.[168] The second text seems have served as an exercise in identity maintenance, restoring the sense of balanced, reasonable scholarship for which Gombrich was renowned after the seminar paper's detour into emotional turbulence. Although one can only speculate, it seems likely that the second text is in fact a previously unpublished piece written by Gombrich after the controversial seminar in

[167] Personal correspondence, Emil Brix to Matthew Finch, 15 April 2004.
[168] See Trapp, p. 99.

order to finesse his views in publication and regain that sense of authority, emotional restraint and balance – that evidence of membership in the 'Republic of Letters' – which was more usually characteristic of his scholarship.

It was only when scholars sought to investigate or rewrite the history of the élite, *bildungsbürgerlich* Viennese milieu from which he emigrated that it was no longer possible to divorce personal experience from intellectual work and Gombrich's emotional concerns shone through. He could not accept that such factors as the Jewish contribution to 'Vienna 1900' might be relevant to a reasoned and compassionate study of his life, work, or original milieu – precisely because those self-same factors, in particular assimilation and its concomitant devotion to *Bildungskultur,* had so intimately shaped his concerns in both his intellectual and his personal life.

This refusal to explore certain factors prevented what might have been a most profitable intellectual encounter between Beller and Gombrich in 1996. At the conclusion of his 1996 article on Jewish Vienna, Beller writes:

> Daß nicht nur 'Mitteleuropa', sondern auch Österreich in Hampstead, der Upper West Side und in Haifa zu finden ist, wäre doch eine fruchtbare Idee, meine ich. Daß es auch nicht gerade ohne Vorteile wäre in einer Zeit, in der Österreich mehr und mehr offiziell an den Westen anknüpft und sich integriert, ist ebenso zu bedenken. Ohne die Anerkennung der Bedeutung von 'Wien um 1900' als eine jüdische Stadt ist das jedoch nicht möglich.[169]

Gombrich's position as a cosmopolitan émigré scholar might have allowed him to build on Beller's comments here, repatriating not only the émigré experience and heritage into Austrian national memory and identity, but also that sense, which

[169] Beller, 'Was bedeutet es', p. 280.

Gombrich bore, of being self-consciously 'post-Jewish' in his position as a cosmopolitan scholar who happened to be of Jewish background.

However, owing to the overwhelming nature of the emotional concerns invested in his identity as member of a cosmopolitan Republic of Letters, Gombrich was understandably unwilling to make this connection. In Gombrich's scholarship and selfhood, the legacy of *Bildung* interacts with anxieties over ethnicity and self-presentation. When trying to understand the work of individual *Gebildete* alongside their life experiences in the context of ethnic persecution, we are raising the issue of historical subjectivity: the dynamics by which lived *Bildungskultur* and the scholarly subject mutually determined one another, and the embeddedness of these dynamics in histories of Jewish assimilation and emigration. This causes the intellectual historian's focus to narrow down from the broad scope of *Bildung* to specific life stories and to examples of scholarship in practice. This more intense focus forms the basis for work in the next chapter, examining Gombrich's representation of the art historian Aby Warburg.

4.0 Afterlives of Aby Warburg:

Gombrich's *Intellectual Biography* and its reception

In the previous chapter, we explored Ernst Gombrich's vision of himself as member of a cosmopolitan 'Republic of Letters'. This imagined community of humanist scholars transcended the ethnonationalism which had been partly responsible for driving Gombrich from the land of his birth in 1936. Particularly significant for this exploration was Malachi Haim Hacohen's thesis that a generation of Central European Jewish émigré scholars subscribed to the notion of such a transcendent Republic precisely because of their ethnic and national backgrounds.

The current chapter continues to build on Hacohen's thesis while attending carefully to the individual and idiosyncratic qualities of Gombrich's scholarship. Rather than grouping émigrés on the basis of their start-point in, say, Vienna, the entire web of influence experienced in the individual trajectory of flight must be acknowledged. The 'clod of native soil' which represents the Republic of Letters for Hacohen also owes its shape to émigrés' host society, and to the interaction of émigrés, individual historical agents, from varying backgrounds. However, it is also necessary to closely read a large corpus of the writings of the individual scholar in question. It is not enough for a study focussed on the juncture of scholarship and personal concerns to attend only to general pronouncements. Gombrich's comments on 'Central Europeanness', his always topical and at times gossipy private letters, or his broad, even journalistic pieces on subjects from Schubert to Goethe are fruitful for the intellectual historian sensitive to the politics of emotions. However, there must also be an engagement with aspects of his work which show more sustained focus and concentration.

Fortunately, the Gombrich *oeuvre* includes a vast quantity of detailed material which speaks quite clearly to the issues of identity and scholarship raised in my study of Gombrich's career. This is his work on Aby Warburg. Gombrich may be most associated with a technical psychology of art and with his popular work, but it is his career-long study of Warburg, including a book-length biography and many articles, speeches and other works, whose attention to the life of an individual scholar relates most directly both to our present focus on the interrelation of lives and scholarship, and, by virtue of its biographical form, to Perry Anderson's 'basic concepts of humanity in society [...which] form, by definition essential premises of public action'.[1] These were the concepts which Anderson alleged had been rendered more conservative in Britain by the influence of Austrian émigrés.

This chapter begins by offering an account of the significance of Warburg's posthumous figure that is informed by Pierre Nora's concept of the *lieu de mémoire*. It then proceeds to look specifically at Gombrich's work on Warburg, especially the *Intellectual Biography* of 1970, and the increasingly critical response to it from the academic community, before focussing on the issues of Jewish identity and mental disturbance which recent scholars have considered to be linked in the person and scholarship of Warburg himself. By contrasting Gombrich's approach to these issues with those of commentators Charlotte Schoell-Glass and Michael P. Steinberg in particular, we can reveal the ways in which Gombrich shaped Warburg's posthumous representation to suit his own concerns in emigration.

[1] Perry Anderson, 'Components', p. 48.

4.1 Warburg as *lieu de mémoire*

Aby Warburg, scion of Hamburg's famous banking family, was an art historian with a special interest in the Florentine Renaissance. His theories of social memory in particular have proved of lasting interest to successive generations of scholars, despite his never having published them, or indeed recorded them outside of his own private notebooks.

In his student years, Warburg attended the University of Bonn, Rome's German Archaeological Institute and the University of Strasbourg, as well as studying psychology in Berlin. In the years 1895-6 he visited the United States of America before establishing himself as an independent scholar in Florence. In 1909, Warburg returned to his native Hamburg, where his private collection of books expanded into a significant intellectual resource for researchers. Fritz Saxl joined him as an assistant in 1913. After Warburg was interned in Ludwig Binswanger's Kreuzlingen sanatorium following a mental breakdown in 1918, Saxl acted to transform the private Warburg library into a research institute connected to the University of Hamburg. Warburg returned to work from his psychiatric treatment in 1924, continuing until his death in 1929. From his original dissertation on Botticelli, Warburg had moved across a wide range of fields intellectually speaking, researching the history of Florentine art but also the indigenous cultures of North America and, more generally, the effect of enduring cultural and memorial forces on practitioners and observers in the field of art.[2]

[2] It is of course difficult for a thesis which concerns itself with the posthumous representation of a figure to direct the reader to a 'definitive' biographical piece. Instead, I recommend Richard Woodfield, 'Aby Warburg (1866-1933)' in *Key Writers on Art: The Twentieth Century*, pp. 262-9 for a brief but useful introduction and bibliography.

Warburg's posthumous position as a respected but little understood or publicized intellectual figure has made him the perfect site for the establishment of a *lieu de mémoire* on Pierre Nora's model. As discussed in section 3.4 of my introduction, these *lieux* are material, symbolic and functional markers of the past, focal points for different interpretations of times gone by. We turn now to a case study of Warburg as *lieu de mémoire*, examining the history of the bust sculpted by his wife from her husband's death mask and installed both before and after the Second World War in the Hamburg Kunsthalle. Joist Grolle has given an extensive account of the bust and its fate in his 1994 article 'Die Büste Aby Warburgs in der Kunsthalle. Ein Hamburger 'Denkmalfall''. Theoretical reflection is almost entirely absent from this narrative text, but the bust itself and the story of its appropriation provide an almost textbook case of Nora's 'sites of memory'.

4.1.1 Warburg's bust at the Hamburg Kunsthalle

In 1924, the year of Aby Warburg's return from the sanatorium at Kreuzlingen, firm plans were drawn up for his wife Mary (1866-1934) to produce a bust of her husband, with Warburg formally inviting her to produce the artwork in a card presented on her 58th birthday. Warburg's unexpected death on 26 October 1929 did not put an end to the project, with Mary making a death mask to ensure the accuracy of the posthumous portrait. What had been intended as a wife's gift to her husband became a public memorial to a significant figure in Hamburg life, when Kunsthalle director Gustav Pauli (1866-1938) made a request to exhibit the bust in his museum. Grolle dates this request to sometime in the period 1930-1. Pauli sited the bust in the museum's Hamburger Saal

alongside other notables of the city, including former director Alfred Lichtwark (1852-1914). For the current director, this use of memorial symbols served his agenda as a reconciliation between two Hamburg art scholars who had differed over the merits of antiquity; Pauli found it good that they, as fellow Hamburgers, 'nach ihrem Tode in der Kunsthalle nebeneinander einen ehrenden Platz eingeräumt bekamen'.[3]

With the rise of the Nazis, Pauli was succeeded by members of the Nazi party, one of whom Grolle identifies as a member of the SS. Warburg's bust was removed from display. On 5 June 1935, Warburg's American-based nephew Eric, whom we previously encountered negotiating over the Institute's residence in London,[4] wrote to the Kunsthalle, requesting the bust's return on the grounds that it was not on display anywhere, let alone in the Hamburger Saal where it had been agreed to exhibit the piece. After some correspondence as to whether the bust constituted a gift or a loan, Eric was sent a curt note announcing the artwork to be once again at his disposal.

Eric, who served with the U.S. Army in World War Two, returned to Hamburg in 1956 working with the private bank Brinckmann, Wirtz and Company. To celebrate the bust's new installation in the Kunsthalle, Eric invited Gertrud Bing to the country she had not visited for twenty-four years. Bing was willing to attend and speak about her mentor, but – perhaps tellingly for the scholar who would destroy her draft biography of Warburg before her death – not as a formal presentation.[5]

The event took place on 31 October 1958. Bing's letter to Walter Solmitz (1905-1962) of 4 December that same year, cited by Grolle, gives a sense of life in the age of

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[3] Joist Grolle, 'Die Büste Aby Warburgs in der Kunsthalle. Ein Hamburger 'Denkmalfall'', *Im Blickfeld: Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunsthalle*, 1 (1994), 149-170 (p.153).
[4] See 3.3.1 above.
[5] Grolle, 'Die Büste', p. 159.

the *lieu de mémoire*, after the Nazi destruction of the society and culture in which the Warburg family had flourished.[6] The letter devotes itself to recounting a taxi-tour of Hamburg as well as the ceremony Bing attended. On this tour, the returning scholar visited the locations formerly associated with the Warburg family. When she asks for Ferdinandstraße 75, her driver acknowledges it as the former Warburg building. The at times biting quality of Bing's correspondence with Gombrich recurs as she offers the blackly comic aside, 'Wieviel bezahlt Erich den Hamburger Taxifahrern dafür?'[7] However, despite Bing's undercutting of melancholia, there is in her communication to Solmitz a sense of pleasure that in the city people still know of Warburg, a satisfaction that the past has not entirely been obliterated.

Bing's correspondent now takes up the chain of memory as traced by Grolle, as Solmitz's letter to Eric Warburg on 7 September 1959 comments on Eric's account of the ceremony.

Out of the bust and the ceremony, Solmitz's letter conjures the posthumous Warburg in various aspects, exploiting an engaging bilingualism. On a personal level, Solmitz considers that ''the Professor would have enjoyed the occasion and the event – and he would have approved of it [...] Very much aware of the vanity and emptiness of mere formal representation, he would have made some jokes',[8] and goes on to write:

> The fact that 'Hamburg', and Heise, and the work of his wife, and 'Kunsthalle', and Bing, and 'The Institute' etc. etc. all 'came together' on that occasion – this fact would have mattered to him a great deal, and he would have appreciated warmly and gratefully the fact that this was begun and accomplished by his nephew, or, in other words that 'The family' hat [*sic*] done this.[9]

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[6] On Solmitz, see Joist Grolle, *Bericht von einem schwierigen Leben: Walter Solmitz (1905 bis 1962), Schüler von Aby Warburg und Ernst Cassirer* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1994).
[7] Grolle, 'Die Büste', p. 163.
[8] Walter Solmitz, cited in Grolle, 'Die Büste', p.164.
[9] Ibid.,, p.165.

At the same time, Warburg as thinker and cultural historian is also invoked, in a move which Grolle glosses as the application of Warburg's own methods to his own representation.[10] In addition to an imagined emotional response by Warburg, Solmitz imagines that

> [H]e would have been aware of the 'danger' or 'risk' which easily goes with the external representation of spiritual energies – if and when they become just an image and a name: - because, 'human nature being what it is', people are apt to think they have 'it' when they have the image and the name. – At the same time as a historian, he was the one to make clear that, even and just during and throughout the periods which were hostile or alien to spiritual and intellectual enlightenment, it was in, and by, these externalisations and formalisation, 'Verhüllungen', 'Verkleidungen', 'Einkapselungen', that the 'seeds' were kept alive – capable to break through the shell, and to grow, and to spread new life when the climate would allow it again.[11]

This glance towards a revival of 'spiritual and intellectual enlightenment' leads Solmitz to consider Warburg's legacy as a force against the damaging effects of the war, much as Nora figures the *lieux de mémoire* as bulwarks against the forces which have ruptured our relationship to the past. Solmitz writes that at this moment of commemoration,

> The future is (and must be) more 'on our minds'. Still, what 'The Institute' can teach us is: historical consciousness ('Mnemosyne'), 'Eingedenk sein' des Vergangenen auch und gerade in Bezug auf die Zukunft. We cannot forget – and even if we can forget, and are inclined to forget: we MUST not forget (because we want to remain loyal to those who fought, and those who suffered, and who died). Die rechte Rück-sicht [*sic*] hilft der rechten Vor-Sicht [*sic*].[12]

This is not just a generalized call on 'us' to 'never forget'; Solmitz accompanies it with a critical interrogation of the speech given by Hamburg senator Hans Biermann-Ratjen (1901-1969) at the ceremony. Solmitz attends particularly to Biermann-Ratjen's

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[10] Ibid.,, p.165.
[11] Solmitz, in Grolle, 'Die Büste', p.165.
[12] Ibid.,, p.166.

> emphasis on the 'wir': '...wir (werden) die tiefe moralische Verschuldung unseres Volkes nicht vergessen.' What seems to disturb me is the impression that he seems to include himself among those who really were 'schuldig'. May be, he was: I don't know him, and I don't know what he felt, and what he did during the Nazi period. – According to the impression which his whole talk gives, however, I would not expect him to have been happy about, or responsible for, any of the Nazi sentiment or doings. – If that is so: W[h]y then does he include himself among those who were responsible? Does that not amount to an unnecessary exaggeration of 'Schuldgefühl' – improper in its placing 'Schuldgefühl' where it does not belong. I should like to see the line of demarcation for the 'WIR' drawn differently: not between all the Germans as guilty on one side, and all the Jews as pure and innocent on the other side. [T]he 'WIR' that I should like to envisage – this 'WIR' would include, and should be felt to include, all those, and only those who – while they are not forgetting the past, and rather are keeping fully aware of it in their minds and their hearts – are working, at present, for a more sensible and enjoyable future.–
> Would you agree? Would he agree?[13]

Solmitz's comments can here be situated in the context of 1950s German attempts to confront issues of identity, memory and responsibility. In 1959, also in Hamburg, Hannah Arendt was awarded the Lessing Prize and used her acceptance speech as an opportunity to discuss human plurality, historical diversity and the émigré's relationship to the homeland in the wake of the Second World War.[14] What is distinctive about the Warburg ceremony, and particularly relevant to the present thesis, is the centrality of Warburg's memory to the discussion. Warburg, the 'he' of that powerful final sentence, is the lens through which these issues are brought into focus. At the same time, Solmitz's use of Warburg for a tentative but timely questioning of war guilt and national identities is just one agenda we can see operating around the bust of Warburg, coexisting as it does with Gertrud Bing's desire in correspondence to preserve and honour a moment from her past, Kunsthalle director Pauli's wish to reconcile Warburg and Alfred Lichtwark posthumously, and the various motives of Mary and Eric Warburg. Warburg's family, friends and colleagues across continents;

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[13] Ibid., p.166.
[14] See Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, 2nd edn, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 94 and p. 392.

the theory of history and the emotional concerns of the living and dead; a span of more than thirty years, as well as the historical rupture of the events of 1933-45 – all are brought into contact by the *lieu de mémoire* of the bust representing Aby Warburg.

4.1.2 Warburg as textual *lieu de mémoire*

The memorial focus we have seen surrounding the figure of Warburg in sculpture and ceremony applies also to the textual legacy of his work. The posthumous 'Aby Warburg' of scholarship is as much a cultural artefact and *lieu de mémoire* as the Kunsthalle bust, an exploitable and emotionally affective locus which has a presence in the fields of art history, the intellectual history of art history, histories of Jewish assimilation, and the personal experiences, reminiscences and dispositions of various scholars.

Warburg's textual legacy comprised not only the *Nachlass* on which Gombrich worked, but also the vast library, and its unique cataloguing system, which underwent its own exile from 1933. The Warburg library catalogue, devised by Aby and developed by successors including Saxl and Bing, was designed to encourage interdisciplinary research and the correlation of visual with written materials. Incarnated as it was on the shelves of the KBW and Warburg Institute, it represented both an intellectual and a substantial legacy of the Institute's founder, precisely the kind of depository of the past on which Nora's studies of memory tend to focus.[15]

[15] On Warburg's library and its ongoing evolution, see Hans-Michael Schäfer, *Die Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg: Geschichte und Persönlichkeiten der Bibliothek Warburg mit Berücksichtigung der Bibliotheklandschaft und der Stadtsituation der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Logos-Verlag, 2003).

As indicated by the Gombrich-Bing correspondence at the outbreak of war,[16] Gombrich had a sense at the time of initial exile that international affairs were dooming the personal pasts and futures of the émigré scholars, as well as the intellectual tradition of which they believed themselves to be a part. Supported by the material resources of the Warburg archive, the operations by which the Warburg staff recounted, promoted and implemented 'art history in the style of Warburg' in themselves constitute the elaboration of a *lieu de mémoire*. These operations are investigated in detail, via archival research, in the next chapter. The current chapter, however, devotes itself to an examination of conflicting scholarly representations of Warburg, particularly Gombrich's biography and critical responses to it, as debates over a *lieu de mémoire*, vying for authority in their accounts of a significant figure in the intellectual history of art history. It is to that biography, and its increasingly critical reception in academia, that we now turn.

4.2 *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* and its reception

In his lifetime, Gombrich was the most prolific and authoritative scholar of Warburg's life and work. *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, written in English and published in 1970, was but one in a series of texts published between 1938 and 1999 on the founder of the institute with which Gombrich's own career had become entwined. J.B. Trapp's *E.H. Gombrich: A Bibliography* lists nine items relating directly to the person of Aby Warburg, including scholarly articles but also a piece written for a 1966

[16] See 3.3.1 above.

edition of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and an entry in an Italian encyclopaedia. These examples do not exhaust the list of works in which Gombrich addressed the legacy of Warburg, including as it does a book review in the Warburg Institute's 1938 *Bibliography of the Survival of the Classics,* a chapter in Gombrich's *Tributes* and also various asides across the Gombrich *oeuvre.*

The remarkable continuity in Gombrich's attitudes towards his predecessor, spanning more than sixty years, is demonstrated by the similarity between Gombrich's first and last published pieces on Warburg, both dealing with the elder scholar's interpretation of the frescoes of the Palazzo Schifanoia.

Warburg presented this work at an international congress in Rome in 1912. The frescoes in question present a cycle of images based on the calendar. Ancient gods in procession and signs of the zodiac appear alongside scenes relating to the months of the year and the life of the court at Ferrara. Warburg noted that the gods who appear in the frescoes can not be associated with the seven planets, as would be usual in medieval tradition, as there are twelve fields featuring thirteen gods in total. Warburg argued that the designer of the fresco scheme had drawn on classical writings to justify the ordering of the zodiac in accordance with the Olympian gods, and that this was a sign of the impending Renaissance as it represented the use of revived classical learning to displace medieval associations. Most radically of all, Warburg offered a new interpretation of the decans, the figures accompanying each sign of the zodiac. He identified one decan as an Indian astrological image, which must have come to Ferrara via ninth-century Arabic scholarship. Warburg's dramatic contention was that this Indian image had in turn derived from the constellation Perseus and therefore that an image from ancient Greece

could be traced on a journey through Eastern and medieval traditions to its restitution in the Renaissance.[17]

1938's brisk review of Warburg's *Italienische Kunst und internationale Astrologie im Palazzo Schifanoja zu Ferrara* considers the analysis of the Schifanoia astrological frescoes as a 'Grenzerweiterung der Kunstgeschichte in stofflicher und räumlicher Beziehung'.[18] He continues:

> Denkmäler wie der Palazzo Schifanoja lassen uns die Stärke der Gegenkräfte ahnen, wider die etwa ein Botticelli den olympischen Stil seiner mythologischen Prägungen fand. Diese paradigmatische Bedeutung wird Warburgs Aufsatz bleiben, auch wenn spätere Forschung Einzelheiten an der Auslegung der Dekanreihe zurechtrücken wird dürfen.[19]

A 'memorial lecture' of 1999 similarly considers the Schifanoia project as an experiment in the 'historical psychology of human expression', breaking out of a restrictive art history focussed above all (in Gombrich's understanding) on the evolution of stylistic expression.[20] In the 1999 lecture, discussion has evolved over sixty years into a consideration of the Warburgian notion of ''Auseinandersetzungsenergie' [...] the power to react [...:] Raphael – or perhaps Peruzzi – had the strength to react against the corrupt and corrupting images of medieval astrology and to replace them by the solid, beautiful bodies taken from classical art'.[21]

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[17] See Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, pp. 191-194 and Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, p.52.
[18] E.H. Gombrich, 'Warburg, Aby. *Italienische Kunst und internationale Astrologie im Palazzo Schifanoja zu Ferrara*', in *A Bibliography of the Survival of the Classics,* ed. by Richard Newald, 2 vols (London: The Warburg Institute, 1938), II, pp.54-55, (p. 54).
[19] Ibid., pp. 54-55.
[20] E.H. Gombrich, 'Aby Warburg: His Aims and Methods. An Anniversary Lecture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 62 (1999), 268-282. Richard Woodfield suggests that, given Gombrich's own professional focus on the historical evolution of styles, he in fact imputes this interest to Warburg: see Richard Woodfield, 'Warburg's "Method"', in *Art History as Cultural History: Warburg's Projects*, ed. by Richard Woodfield (Amsterdam: G + B Arts, 2001), pp. 259-293.
[21] Gombrich, 'Aby Warburg: His Aims and Methods', p. 276.

By 1999, the possibility of Warburg's original interpretation being corrected by future research had already been addressed by Gombrich several times. Gombrich had two findings: that empirical research did not support Warburg's hypothesis, and that this was an instance of the 'autobiographical reflex' coming into play. In his piece 'Relativism in the History of Ideas', Gombrich took it almost for granted that Warburg was in error when he claimed that the Decan of the ram at Schifanoia is really an image of Perseus 'disguised almost beyond recognition'. Gombrich simply states, 'In that theory the wish [to prove the afterlife of pagan antiquity in the Christian era] was father to the thought; but [Fritz] Saxl told me that he found it impossible to convince Warburg of his error.'[22] Gombrich goes on to write of the 'obvious point that Warburg was not infallible'.[23] This concern for the empirical and verifiable in Gombrich's scholarship can be linked once more to a Popperian philosophy of knowledge, but also to the emotional commitment to a cosmopolitanism which strictly delimited the zone of reasonable scholarship: when we examine the tensions between Gombrich's account of Warburg and more recent scholarship, including criticism of the *Intellectual Biography,* it highlights the extent to which Gombrich's work on his predecessor was affected by his, and indeed his fellow émigrés', preoccupations about scholarship and the identity of assimilated Jews.

Although every piece Gombrich wrote on Warburg is of importance, the *Intellectual Biography* is the longest and perhaps the most significant document of Gombrich's vision of his predecessor. Over seventeen chapters, the book traces the development of Warburg's thought over his lifetime. Gombrich gives an account of Warburg's schooling, university years, and career as a private scholar; of his interests in

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[22] Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, p.52. 'Relativism in the History of Ideas' refers the reader to E.H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Phaidon, 1970), p. 194. There, the same 'error' is highlighted, if in less bluntly critical terms: it is simply commented, 'The ingenious arguments [Warburg] used in support of this theory have not convinced specialists'.
[23] Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, p.52.

astrology, artistic style, and the concept of memory; of key texts, including his dissertation on Botticelli, his lecture on the 'Serpent Ritual' of the Pueblo people of New Mexico, and *Mnemosyne,* the unfinished 'picture atlas' which strove to demonstrate the persistence of emotionally charged images across history by juxtaposing images from many epochs. On these topics, Gombrich cites Warburg extensively and provides substantial analysis and commentary.

Gombrich's account is strong on the exegesis of Warburg's surviving notes and papers, and it emphasizes particularly the attention to Renaissance idyll and the pastoral displayed by nineteenth-century scholars after Burckhardt. This approach has its benefits, and resonates with contemporary studies such as Bernd Roeck's *Florenz 1900: Die Suche nach Arkadien.*[24] However, on other aspects of Warburg's life and career, Gombrich is most reticent.

Amongst topics less well attended to is Warburg's well-known mental breakdown. Warburg spent the years 1918-1923 as a mental health in-patient after threatening to kill his family at the end of the First World War. Gombrich's biography leaves this period, the starkest point of contact between Warburg's emotional and scholarly lives, untouched.[25] Where such contact is unavoidable, Gombrich either represents it as trivial, as in the case of a fantasy correspondence conducted with the philosopher André Jolles (1874-1946), discussed further below, or as deviating from scholarly norms of which Warburg was aware. With reference to the latter situation, Gombrich cites a comment from Warburg's journal, stating that the Hamburg art

[24] Bernd Roeck, *Florenz 1900: Die Suche nach Arkadien* (Munich: Beck, 2001).
[25] On Warburg's mental breakdown, see Karl Königseder, 'Aby Warburg im "Bellevue"' in *Aby M. Warburg "Ekstatische Nymphe...trauernder Flußgott" Porträt eines Gelehrten,* ed. by Robert Galitz und Brita Reimers (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 1995), pp. 74-98.

historian 'at certain moments, at least, [...] was fully aware of the private and personal character of his project':[26]

> Sometimes it looks to me as if, in my role as psycho-historian, I tried to diagnose the schizophrenia of Western civilisation from its images in an autobiographical reflex. The ecstatic 'Nympha' (manic) on the one side and the mourning river-god (depressive) on the other...[27]

The possibility of deeper entwinement between Warburg's scholarship and emotional life was left largely untouched until a later generation of scholars approached the issue. A statement by art historian Margaret Iversen broadly sums up the way this later scholarship takes issue with Gombrich's work. In Gombrich's hands, she argues, 'Warburg is deproblematized, becalmed, and his complex and conflicted theory of art turned into an unambiguous affirmation of Enlightenment ideals'.[28] Iversen's work, together with other alternative studies of Warburg, indicates the extent to which Gombrich's apparently definitive biography was, and remains, contestable in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Scholars working on Warburg have, broadly speaking, sought to reverse a perceived deproblematisation of Warburg in intellectual history. There are exceptions, such as Kurt W. Forster's introduction to the 1999 English translation of Warburg's published writings, which builds on Gombrich's account of Warburg in a context of late-twentieth-century accounts of nineteenth-century art history.[29] Generally, however, writings on the Hamburg art historian after Gombrich have tended to be explicitly revisionist or even combative towards the émigré biographer's account. Often this has involved linking issues in intellectual history with

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[26] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 303.
[27] Warburg, cited in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 303.
[28] Margaret Iversen, 'Retrieving Warburg's Tradition', in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Donald Preziosi (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 215-225 (p. 216). Iversen's text also deals with Erwin Panofsky's role in the posthumous representation of Warburg and his thought.
[29] Kurt W. Forster, 'Introduction', in Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, trans. by David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), pp. 1-75.

Warburg's personal situation, above all his mental health. This yoking together of the 'symptomatic' and the 'scholarly' Warburg runs utterly counter to the project of the *Intellectual Biography.*

An examination of Gombrich's discussion of the 'Fragment on the Nympha' may stand as an example of both Gombrich's dissociation of the 'symptomatic' and 'scholarly', and the fruit of moves made by later scholars to restore this link.[30] At the turn of the century, during an extended stay in Florence, Warburg and the Dutch philosopher André Jolles entered into correspondence about a fictitious nymph come to life and pursued by a besotted art historian.[31] In his biography, Gombrich interprets the surviving material of this never-published project, describing it as providing a

> loose and non-committal form [which] would enable the author to insert digressions to his heart's content, and to treat the question [of representations of nymphae] in a tone between seriousness and banter in which the most daring flights of fancy would not seem out of place.[32]

Whilst Gombrich recognizes the 'Fragment' to be a precursor of Warburg's mature theoretical writings, he also judges that 'as a literary plan it was doomed to failure. The ingredients of jocularity and earnestness, of aesthetic enthusiasm and documentary research, did not mix too well'.[33]

Although Gombrich's evaluation acknowledges the 'inner tension that renders the fragments so interesting as a human document', he attributes this tension to 'the difficulty with which anyone was faced who searched for an unromantic, strictly historical approach to a period so vested with emotion as was the Quattrocento for art-

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[30] See Gombrich, *Aby Warburg,* pp. 105-127.
[31] See Antoine Bodar, 'Aby Warburg en André Jolles een Florentijnse vriendschap', *Nexus,* 1 (1991), 5-18.
[32] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg,* p. 107.
[33] Ibid., p. 107.

lovers of the *fin de siècle*'.[34] There is an important point here, which is that Warburg's life and career encompassed the epoch of the nineteenth century's 'Northern European fascination with the Italian Renaissance', an era best documented in the case of Warburg by Bernd Roeck. However, Gombrich's analysis serves to ensure that even Warburg's fantasies are bound by a safely 'unromantic, strictly historical approach'.[35] When Warburg 'speaks of the 'Nympha' as a beautiful butterfly which eludes his grasp'[36] and writes '...I lost my reason. It was always she who brought life and movement into an otherwise calm scene. Indeed, she appeared to be the embodiment of movement...but it is very unpleasant to be her lover',[37] Gombrich insists that 'we must see Warburg's reaction to the female figure in rapid motion'[38] in the context of *fin-de-siècle* feminism, Isadora Duncan and the decline of 'whalebone and stiff collar'.[39]

More profound connections to Warburg's concerns could not be unearthed until other scholars had investigated and interpreted the same primary material, juxtaposing it with matter Gombrich had chosen not to pursue in his research.

Philippe-Alain Michaud's study of *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion* demonstrates the potential entwinement of Warburg's 'illness' and his scholarship. Michaud cites the letter to Jolles from Gombrich's book alongside a 1905 piece by Warburg on Florentine engraving, noting the recurrence of the identification of nymphae and butterflies. Michaud points us towards Warburg's words on a wood engraving of a dancing female figure, attributed to Baccio Baldini:

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[34] Ibid., p. 112.
[35] The 'Northern European fascination' is a phrase of Forster, p. 4. See also Roeck, *Florenz 1900*.
[36] Warburg, cited in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 110.
[37] Ibid., p. 108.
[38] Ibid., p. 110.
[39] Ibid., p. 109.

> [T]he antique butterfly has emerged from the Burgundian chrysalis: the dress flows free...; and a Medusa-winged headdress...has banished the empty ostentation of the hennin. This is the native idealism of grace in motion that Botticelli made into the noblest expressive resource of early Renaissance art.[40]

Michaud then juxtaposes these more or less 'scholarly' writings with excerpts from an entry from the case history kept by the clinic where Warburg was treated. This material was made available to Warburg Institute scholars from 1931, but Gombrich never pursued it.[41] The original version of the entry cited by Michaud, now lodged in the archives of the University of Tübingen, reports that Warburg practised an

> Eigentl. Kultus mit kl. Faltern u. Schmetterlingen, die Nachts in s. Zimmer fliegen. Nennt diese Seelentierchen; kann sich mit ihnen stundenlang[ ]unterhalten. In grosser Sorge, dass sein "klein Falterchen" nichts zu essen hat; will ihm Milch zu trinken geben, bringt ihm vom Spaz'gang e. Lindenblatt mit. Ist unglück., wenn es fortfliegt. Sucht Klein-Falterchen überall. Ist glück., wieder irg. ein and. kl. Tierchen zu finden. Kann sich folgenderm: "Klein-Falterchen, ich danke dir, dass der Prof. mit dir snaken kann, darf ich dir all mein leid klagen, denk mal, klein Falterchen, am 18.XI.18 hatte ich so angst u.m. Fami., da habe ich m. Revolver genommen u. wollte meine Familie u. mich töten. Weisst du, weil der Bolschewismus kam. Da sagte Dets (s. Tochter): aber Vater, was tust du? Und da hat mein Mieken (Frau) mit mir gerungen u. wollte mir die Waffe wegnehmen. Weisst du Falterchen, da hat mein Fledermäuschen (Freder, s. zweite Tochter) an "Malice" (Max u. Alice, Bruder u. Schwägerin) telephon. Die kamen gleich im Auto u. brachten Dr. Franke u. Senator Petersen im Auto mit. Peterchen hat sich dann in m. Wandschrank versteckt u. mein Mieken u. F[r]anke sind mit mir ausgegangen. Petersen sagte mir: Warburg, ich habe nie etw. von dir verlangt, jetzt bitte ich dich, mit mir in die Klinik zu fahren, denn du bist krank. Weisst du, da bin ich mit meinem Mieken zu Lienau gefahren, da haben wir Hasenleber gegessen, da habe ich gesagt, mein Mieken, iss keine Hasenleber. Sie hat nichts gehört, u. da ist das Unglück geschehen." Schreibt seitenlange Briefe über Klein-Falterchen an s. Frau.[42]

Michaud does not note the way Gombrich's voice as biographer frames and defuses the power which the Jolles letter might have in the light of this 'other' butterfly obsession. Instead, he simply comments: 'Perhaps the butterflies to whom Warburg

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[40] Warburg, cited in Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion,* trans. by Sophie Hawkins (New York: Zone Books, 2004), pp. 173-4.
[41] See 5.2.1 below.
[42] Universitätsarchiv Tübingen (UT), Ludwig-Binswanger-Archiv (LBA), Aby Warburg Krankengeschichte, Box 441/3782, File 3, p. 25.

confided his distress represented a new manifestation of the nymph, which, in 1918, continued to haunt him.'[43] However, the new possibilities and new connections this opens for interpretations of Warburg's thought are self-evident: it is not only that Michaud draws on material from beyond the *Nachlass* which was Gombrich's principal source, but also that his approach, bringing together fantasy, published scholarship, and psychiatric case notes, is positively iconoclastic compared to the respectful reserve to which Gombrich cleft. It also demonstrates those aspects of Warburg's nymph specific to the thought and concerns of the Hamburg art historian. This is important when a contemporary scholar such as Kurt W. Foster, following Gombrich with regard to the notion of nymph as 'a late Victorian male fantasy, an erotic wish fulfilment par excellence', can assimilate Warburg's comments to similar erotic projections in the work of John Ruskin and Marcel Proust.[44] Indeed, feminist art historians – taking their lead, perhaps, from Margaret Iversen – have room here to pursue and interrogate Gombrich's somewhat coy allegation that

> the erotic disguise of the correspondence is not merely a literary conceit. There was something in [the nympha] which struck the two students of art as the embodiment of passion [...] We are in 1900. It is the period when the fight for the 'new woman', for liberation and emancipation, had reached its climax. The contrast between tight-laced respectability and the young girl asserting her right to unrestricted movement in sport and dance was very much a live issue at the time.[45]

Significant for this issue also is Gombrich's footnoted comment that 'We know from Warburg's diary of a few years later that his wife wore a 'reform dress' and that he was so sensitive as to its propriety that they had a 'row' because a white piece of material (probably of the petticoat) kept showing (17 May 1905.)'[46]

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[43] Michaud, p. 172.
[44] Foster, pp. 18-20.
[45] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 109.
[46] Ibid., p. 109 fn. 1.

Both the possibility of a feminist engagement with Warburg and the broader clash over what is appropriate material for the intellectual historian are linked to the changes in intellectual life surrounding the events of 1968. At the time, Perry Anderson laid the blame for the stunting of a British radical intellectual culture at the door of Gombrich and his émigré peers. In a similar vein, the scholar Charlotte Schoell-Glass has recently pursued a Warburg alien to Gombrich's account on the basis of perceived affinities between the birth of modern art history in *fin-de-siècle* German academia and the late-twentieth-century establishment of contemporary cultural studies, significantly including women's studies, understood by Schoell-Glass as 'the vessel for a serious and widespread dissatisfaction with the academic structure of the disciplines we have inherited, which no longer seem to suit many of our contemporary questions, concerns, problems, or anxieties'.[47] It seems clearly understandable that conflict would arise between researchers of later generations, dissatisfied with their scholarly inheritance, and figures such as Gombrich, responsible for preserving many scholarly traditions through the rise of Nazism and subsequent international conflict. We look at the growing intellectual challenge to 'Gombrich's Warburg' in order to highlight how and why its authority is so debatable, and how the most contentious issues relate directly to the question of scholarship in emigration.

However, it should be noted that, although there has been significant study of Warburg within German academia, my focus here is on Anglophone scholarly responses to the art historian and Gombrich's portrayal of him. My thesis originates from, among other things, an engagement with émigré influences in British national culture, and therefore examines German-language, Francophone and other scholarship only where it speaks most pointedly to Gombrich's career and related issues. This is not

[47] Charlotte Schoell-Glass, 'Aby Warburg: Forced Identity and "Cultural Science"' in *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History*, pp.218-230 (p. 218).

a comprehensive history of the reception of Gombrich's biography in national or international academia.[48]

4.2.1 Tentative early responses

Gombrich's biography, when published in 1970, carried his authority as the then-director of the institute that Warburg founded, and as a scholar who was exceedingly well-acquainted with the vast Warburg *Nachlass* of notes, drafts, journals, letters and typescripts preserved after the art historian's death in 1929. However, from the earliest years of the book's release, other scholars were challenging Gombrich's representation.

In 1973, Gombrich received a private letter from one Klaus Berger, who had assisted Warburg's research in the mid-1920s. Berger's polite letter to the author of the *Intellectual Biography* took issue with that publication, in terms which foreshadowed later published criticism:

> Mit mir und einigen meiner Altergenossen erschien [Warburg] immer als der Zauberer, der in die magische Welt eingedrungen war und das mit seiner Krankheit bezahlt hatte, nun aber, triumphierend zurückgekehrt, von den dämonischen Kräften und Mächten ganz gelassen berichten konnte. [...] Das Einzige, was mir auch heute noch und selbst nach Ihrer Studie zweifelhaft ist, bezieht sich auf seine implizierte Rolle als Prediger einer moralischen Lehre und seine Verteidigung einer irrationalen Weltordnung. Die Ansätze dazu kann man

[48] As an aside, it is worth noting that idiosyncrasy in the posthumous intellectual reception of Warburg seems potentially as characteristic of German as Anglophone scholarship: as Charlotte Schoell-Glass comments in 'Aby Warburg', p. 221, 'It was and continues to be Warburg's fate to be regarded and written about as a law unto himself. The considerable work that has been done since Gombrich's biography was published in a German translation in 1980 has not changed this.' For a fuller discussion of Warburg's reception in postwar Germany, one which draws particular attention to the ways in which the figure of Warburg was recovered for German academia through the circulation of the writings of Walter Benjamin and the revival of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, see Michael Diers, 'Warburg and the Warburgian Tradition of Cultural History', trans. by Thomas Girst and Dorothea von Moltke, *New German Critique*, 65 (1995), 59-73.

> sicher nicht übersehen, aber es ist offenbar das Mehr oder Weniger, das in seinen Schriften und in seinen Lebensreaktionen sich verschieden bemerkbar macht.[49]

Berger's letter does not offer a thorough or rigorously argued response either to Gombrich's account or even Berger's own personal encounter with Warburg. However, it is clear that, for Berger, Warburg's relationship to the irrational and his charismatic personal qualities are of absolute importance in understanding the older art historian as a scholar.

Berger's letter seems never to have appeared beyond Gombrich's personal files, but it is contemporary to published comments in book reviews of the *Intellectual Biography* by Felix Gilbert (1905-1991) and Hans Liebeschütz (1893-1978), themselves émigré scholars.[50]

These early reviews, which sought to publicly indicate the limits of Gombrich's biography, were cautious. They did not contest his inheritance of the institute for which he felt 'der Londoner Universität und der Gelehrtenrepublik gegenüber verantwortlich', nor was there any doubt about the quality of his archival research.[51] Liebeschütz, for example, in his 'Aby Warburg (1866-1929) as Interpreter of Civilisation', complimented Gombrich on an 'interpretation [...] performed with detachment, but also with respectful consideration of the man whose mind has remained a living force in the Institute he established', describing his own essay as a mere and modest addition, a

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[49] EHG, Klaus Berger to Gombrich, 2 February 1973.
[50] Liebeschütz and Gilbert's early criticism of Gombrich's book is also discussed briefly in Schoell-Glass, 'Aby Warburg', p. 221. On Liebeschütz, see Wolfgang Liebeschütz, 'Liebeschütz, Hans' in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, ed. by Fritz Wagner, 20 vols (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1985), XIV, pp. 489-490. On Gilbert, see Felix Gilbert, *A European Past: Memoirs 1905-1945* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1988).
[51] Gombrich, 'Festvortrag', p. 15.

'compilation of [...] reminiscences [...] form[ing] a small contribution to the intellectual history of German Jewry'.[52]

In fact, such reminiscences never appear in Liebeschütz's text, and this invocation of the anecdotal serves only to conceal a careful critique of Gombrich's approach. Liebeschütz points out that Gombrich's 'work is mainly based on an extensive amount of material taken from Warburg's notebooks, which are crammed with observations, reflections, and sketches for academic courses'.[53] Keeping his most pointed criticism of Gombrich buried in footnotes, Liebeschütz argues that Gombrich underplays, for example, the influence of Karl Lamprecht (1856-1915) on Warburg's thought.

Lamprecht was a pioneering figure who had worked to develop a scientific and interdisciplinary approach to the collective psyche in cultural and art history. His theoretical approach broadly sought a collective mentality underpinning the material, social and cultural structures of any historical moment, so that, for example, 'the study of artistic phenomena could lead to an understanding of the politics, law and social and economic institutions of a certain period because the essential mentality behind all of these activities must be the same.'[54]

Liebeschütz acknowledges that 'For [Lamprecht] generalisations became more important than direct contact with the sources [...] This way of working was utterly alien to Warburg. No comprehensive idea could overshadow his interest in every detail

[52] Hans Liebeschütz, 'Aby Warburg (1866-1929) as Interpreter of Civilisation', *Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute*, 16 (1971), 225-236 (p. 225).
[53] Ibid., p. 225.
[54] Brush, p. 144.

of all objects included in his research.'[55] However, he also points to Lamprecht's under-representation in Gombrich's book:

> After the period of Warburg's studies under Lamprecht in Bonn his teacher's name seems almost to fade away from his notes. Gombrich's book deals with Lamprecht's influence in the years of Warburg's maturity on 19 pages; only once [...] is Lamprecht's name mentioned as a quoted authority in Warburg's notes.[56]

Felix Gilbert's 1972 review in the *Journal of Modern History* sets out, more directly than Liebeschütz, an objection to Gombrich's biography based on its overemphasis on the *Nachlass* and failure to engage with a wider intellectual history:

> [I]n consequence of this approach those scholars and writers whom Warburg mentions in his notes appear as the crucial influences in his development. A fuller and also fairer appreciation of Warburg's originality and achievement would have resulted from a more comprehensive description of the general scholarly and intellectual milieu of his time.[57]

However, Gilbert's article, offering an introductory overview of Warburg's context in intellectual history, is no less respectful of Gombrich's status and intellectual achievement:

> Considering that one of the most eminent art historians is the author of this book, it hardly needs to be said that its shortcomings are not those of scholarly technique or intellectual obtuseness. [...] Gombrich's extensive use of Warburg's notes – frequently only different formulations of the same thought – initiates the reader into all the nuances and shadings of Warburg's thinking.[58]

Gilbert's article built on Gombrich's own account of Moritz Warburg's dissatisfaction with his son for breaking with Jewish tradition, noting the family's status

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[55] Hans Liebeschütz, p. 234.
[56] Ibid., p. 234 fn. 17.
[57] Felix Gilbert, 'From Art History to the History of Civilisation: Gombrich's Biography of Aby Warburg', *Journal of Modern History*, 44 (1972), 381-391 (pp. 381-2).
[58] Ibid., pp. 381-2.

as the only Jewish private bankers among Germany's financial leadership not to have fully assimilated, and writing of Warburg *Sohn* that

> The alienation from this Jewish world of his family and the identification with the social world of the empire refined his feelings for the survival of residues from earlier times. It increased his perceptivity for the continuation of beliefs of an older culture in a later one.[59]

Liebeschütz's account, though it pays less attention than Gilbert's to Warburg's scholarly contemporaries, even more explicitly confronts the question of Jewish assimilation which faced the scholar. Liebeschütz argues that even if Warburg's 'mind was shaped more by revolt against the [Jewish] tradition than its impact',[60] it remains significant for the historian that the Warburgs were strong supporters of the Hamburg orthodox community and that Aby's father, and later his younger brother Fritz, both served on the board administering the general affairs of the city's Jewish community. He writes that 'Warburg was aware of the antisemitic threat in the German environment'[61] and although

> Warburg intended to place himself and his work as a scholar on neutral ground, neither Jewish nor Christian [...] Warburg did not forget his roots, but he did not allow himself to be proud of them [...] There were preferences fostered by Jewish tradition which did not lose their power completely by the process of secularisation.[62]

The measured comments of Gilbert and Liebeschütz are significant as the opening moves in an increasingly critical reception of Gombrich's Warburg, above all (though not exclusively) in English-speaking academia, which had access to the *Intellectual Biography* for eleven years before the publication of a German translation.

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[59] Ibid., p. 390.
[60] Hans Liebeschütz, p. 226.
[61] Ibid., p. 228.
[62] Ibid., p. 230.

4.2.2 An increasingly critical reception

If Warburg's intellectual legacy has increasingly become a battleground for scholars, this is owing to a widespread perception that, as Margaret Iversen put it in 1993, in the hands of Gombrich and his peers, Warburg has been posthumously 'deproblematised' and 'becalmed'.[63] For Iversen, questioning Gombrich's simplistic polarisation of the 'Apollonian and Dionysian [...] as good rational distanciation versus bad emotional abandon', a 'fairer reading of Warburg would indicate his equal concern for the losses incurred by too much rational detachment from [...] myth, tragedy, emotion or what we might call the unconscious'.[64] On the basis of Warburg's 'implicit critique of the ideal of total detachment in either aesthetics or scholarship', she reimagines him as a potential 'ally' for the feminist art-historical scholarship of her time.[65]

Iversen's is just one of a variety of positions from which scholarly criticism has been articulated; these, in turn, have led to a proliferation of distinctive representations of Aby Warburg.

Amongst the scholars seeking to radically revise our perceptions of Warburg is Karl Königseder, who, having studied the archives of Warburg's mental heath treatment at Ludwig Binswanger's (1881-1966) Kreuzlingen clinic, finds poetic if empirically weak 'affinities' between Warburg and the Viennese satirist Karl Kraus. His argument rests on their collection and collation of vast amounts of press material relating to the

[63] Iversen, p. 216.
[64] Ibid., p. 217.
[65] Ibid., p. 215.

First World War.[66] Philippe-Alain Michaud, who draws on Königseder's analysis of Warburg's case history, associates a preoccupation with motion on Warburg's part with the early days of the cinema, although the 'affinity' is again perhaps a loose one:

> Although the question of motion runs through all of his research, Warburg's interest in its mechanical reproduction seems quite marginal. [...] It is nonetheless true that Warburg's method [...] was entirely based on an aesthetic of movement that was expressed at the end of the nineteenth century by the nascent cinema.[67]

Another scholar who has represented Warburg in a manner contrary to Gombrich is Matthew Rampley. He implicitly refers to, and opposes, Gombrich when he writes,

> It has been assumed that Warburg subscribed unquestioningly to an Enlightenment – even Darwinist – view of history, in which the process towards ever greater rationality was welcomed as an unambiguous progression. This view has to be tempered by the recognition that Warburg expressed reservations about the extent to which the process of modernisation could be regarded as 'progress.'[68]

The Warburg who appears in Rampley's work, above all his book *The Remembrance of Things Past,* bears a strong resemblance to Walter Benjamin:

> Heirs to an Enlightenment concern with human phylogenesis, their work constantly revolves around the question of cognitive development, and its appearance in the succession of cultural forms. And yet, in contrast to the optimistic belief in progress, both were profoundly aware that 'modernity' was not to be seen as an unequivocal victory of reason over the irrationality of the pre-modern era, and also that where 'progress' had been achieved, its place was fragile.[69]

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[66] Warburg collected such material for his private archive, and Kraus for his mammoth satire *Die letzte Tage der Menschheit.* See Königseder.
[67] Michaud, p. 39.
[68] Matthew Rampley, *The Remembrance of Things Past: On Aby M. Warburg and Walter Benjamin* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), p. 115. See also Matthew Rampley, 'Mimesis and Allegory. On Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin' in *Art History as Cultural History*, pp. 121-149.
[69] Rampley, *Remembrance,* p. 13.

Rampley admits that, although there is evidence that Benjamin knew of Warburg, a relationship between the two thinkers lies more in contemporary theoretical reflection than evidence from the archive or their contemporaries:

> In many cases one cannot speak of a direct influence of the one on the other: but one can, following Benjamin's own notion, lay out their ideas alongside each other in the form of a constellation, whose elements inform and reflect off each other.[70]

Rampley, Michaud and Königseder are all making serious and substantial contributions to intellectual history, but it should be clear that their writings are also contributions to the Warburg *lieu de mémoire*. In addition to their scholarly value, these texts operate in a domain of affinity and insinuation, imbuing Warburg's posthumous figure with a particular tint – proto-Benjaminian, Kraussian, cinematographic. Viewing Warburg in any of these lights is intriguing and thought-provoking, but we must also recall Margaret Iversen's key allegation against Gombrich's representation – that complex, radical aspects of Warburg have been obscured by the values of a rational Enlightenment humanism. When Iversen's comments are considered alongside the involvement of that rational humanism in émigrés' negotiation of ethnic identity, it becomes clear that the most significant aspects of Warburg's posthumous representation being debated are his rationality, and his sense of ethnic identity. It is to these particularly controversial issues that we now turn.

[70] Ibid., p. 11.

4.3 Ethnic identity and mental disturbance in the representation of Warburg

When examining the points of contact between scholarship and emotional concerns in the case of Aby Warburg, Warburg's mental disturbance and sense of ethnicity rise to the fore. His wartime collection of materials on the Jewish position in Germany, his mental breakdown of 1918, and the subsequent psychiatric treatment leading to a renewed interest in the Native Americans he had visited in the 1890s, all relate to these issues. Among recent scholars, Charlotte Schoell-Glass and Michael P. Steinberg in particular have identified and explored in depth the position of ethnic identity and fierce, 'irrational', emotional concerns within Warburg's life and work. Their engagement with primary sources lends weight to accounts which challenge the marginalisation of these issues in Gombrich's own representation of the senior art historian, and encourages the researcher to question Gombrich's own concerns in causing such marginalisation.

To give the later studies of Warburg dealing with these issues their full due in relation to my thesis, we must examine the relevant portions of Gombrich's own account of Warburg. The first two sub-sections below give an account of Gombrich's approach to Warburg's Jewish identity and his mental health problems, before moving on to examine the alternative visions of Warburg produced by Schoell-Glass and Steinberg.

4.3.1 Gombrich on the 'Jewish' Warburg

It cannot be said that Ernst Gombrich hid the Jewish background of Aby Warburg in his biographical writings. Rather, he assigned to his subject the same attitude which he had claimed in 1993: 'I have not the slightest wish to deny or to conceal my Jewish origins, but when I think of history I think of Western culture rather than the culture of the ghetto, of which I know, perhaps, too little.'[71]

The issue here is, of course, not only Gombrich's identification with an implicitly Christian 'Western culture', but also the notion that the only alternative would be 'the culture of the ghetto'. In Gombrich's account of Warburg, the Hamburg art historian of the preceding generation was located at broadly similar co-ordinates to the parents of the biographer himself, being a 'member of a devout Jewish household [...who] had quickly emancipated himself from religion and ritualism, much to his father's grief'.[72]

The most sustained engagement with Warburg's position as a member of an orthodox Jewish banking family occurs in the second chapter of Gombrich's biography, lasting five pages and entitled 'PRELUDE (1866-1886)'.[73] Gombrich cites an account Warburg gives of his mother's illness in 1874. On a sightseeing trip at the Austrian resort of Ischl, where his ailing mother was carried up the Calvarienberg in a litter, Warburg reports: 'I saw for the first time and dimly experienced in the Stations of the Cross, executed in a debased peasant style, the stark and tragic power of the Passion of Christ.'[74] The implications of this 'dim experience' for a boy brought up as an observant

[71] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 28.
[72] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 71.
[73] Ibid., pp. 19-24.
[74] Ibid., p. 20.

Jew are not directly interrogated, but Gombrich cites a further passage demonstrating that 'the memories of that terrible summer remained linked, in Warburg's mind, with his estrangement from Jewish religion'.[75] In this passage, Warburg recalls being directed to pray for his mother by his grandfather, and also, 'as counterpoise to these deeply disturbing events' his first contravention of Jewish dietary laws (he ate sausages) and his discovery of 'stories about Red Indians [...which] obviously offered a means of withdrawing from a depressing reality in which I was quite helpless'.[76] These were the first steps, according to Gombrich's narrative, in an early assertion of

> independence, both in matters of religion and in his choice of a career. He rebelled against the strict Jewish ritualism of his home and openly expressed his disgust at his grandmother's suggestion that he should become a Rabbi. He would not hear of going into one of the professions either. Instead he declared his intention of taking up the history of art.[77]

According to Gombrich, all of Warburg's concerns and anxieties with regard to Jewish identity were resolved by young adulthood. By the age of twenty, in the chapter focussing on Warburg's arrival at the University of Bonn, there is only passing mention 'of his refusal to observe the dietary restrictions which his father still wanted him to maintain'.[78] Gombrich displaces Jewishness into childhood and makes the history of art an 'adult' discipline devoid of all but secular, ethnically unmarked and scholarly (as opposed to mere 'professional') concerns.

To complete this process of rendering Warburg and his scholarship mature, secular and reasoned, however, Gombrich's biographical account must also deal with those irrational – therefore, by Gombrich's definition, unscholarly – elements which

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[75] Ibid., p. 20.
[76] Warburg, cited in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 20.
[77] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 22.
[78] Ibid., p. 25.

contributed to Warburg's life and work. In particular, this meant the mental illness which consumed Warburg during and after the First World War.

4.3.2 'The Haunted Reformation': Gombrich's account of Warburg's mental breakdown

Gombrich depicted 'The Haunted Reformation' of Warburg's war years, in which he obsessively collected material on the progress of the 1914-18 conflict, as the excessive application of 'scholarly temperament and training'.[79] It was as if Warburg's difficulties were merely those of a professional historian busying himself because he was too old for military service. Gombrich denied that it 'lie[s] within the scope or the competence of this study to describe the mental agonies of Warburg's psychotic years', which followed the cessation of hostilities, and the *Intellectual Biography* informs the reader that

> [t]he war years had increased Warburg's excitability and the sense of doom which had settled on him. When the breakdown of Germany in 1918 had confirmed his worst fears, he no longer succeeded in holding the encroaching demons at bay. [...] The two preoccupations of his scholarly life, the expression of passion and the reaction to fear, were gripping him in the form of terrible tantrums and phobias, obsessions and delusions which ultimately made him a danger to himself and his surroundings and led to his confinement in a closed ward.[80]

Gombrich's particularly grim depiction of Warburg's unquestionably grave illness demarcates this period of the art historian's life as too turbulent for biography or analysis.

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[79] Ibid., p. 206.
[80] Ibid., p. 215.

Only in a footnoted reference to Carl-Georg Heise's short volume of memoirs, *Persönliche Erinnerungen an Aby Warburg,* does Gombrich point the way to a fuller account of Warburg's breakdown.[81]

In his book, written in wartime Berlin and first printed in December 1946 by the American branch of the Warburg family, Heise states that he considers it 'eines der dringlichsten Erfordernisse einer definitiven Warburg-Biographie, die Krankheitsjahre auf das Gründlichste zu erforschen'.[82] This appears to contradict Gombrich's discreet approach to Warburg's breakdown, but Heise's account in fact largely suits Gombrich's image of the overzealous scholar applying his talents to the traumatic business of modern war. Heise's Warburg is a cultural seismograph, who even at the outbreak of hostilities 'sah [...] die Katastrophe für Deutschland voraus und hat oft gesagt, er fühle sich wie Kassandra':[83] of the collection of propaganda material and reportage, he writes that Warburg's 'selbstgewählter Dienst war gewiss anstrengender und aufreibender als der so manches Frontsoldaten'.[84]

Heise makes the claim that 'Heute wissen wir, dass jeder Mensch nicht zufällige, sondern nur die ihm eigentümlich zugehörenden Krankheiten durchzumachen hat, und dass ihr besonderer Verlauf umso aussagekräftiger ist, je höher die geistige Persönlichkeit steht'.[85]

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[81] Ibid., p. 215 fn. 1.
[82] Carl-Georg Heise, *Persönliche Erinnerungen an Aby Warburg* (New York: Philip Reed, 1947), p. 45.
[83] Ibid., p. 42.
[84] Ibid., p. 44. For a further exploration of this approach to Warburg's mental breakdown, see Bernd Roeck, 'Epilog – Ein Mann des 19. Jahrhunderts' in *Der junge Aby Warburg* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1997), pp. 101-108. There Roeck argues that Warburg deployed the classical humanist tradition to confront cholera, war and the forces of unreason, but that the war destroyed for him the illusion that humans were reasoning beings. Roeck's work was, of course, unavailable to Gombrich at the time he wrote the *Intellectual Biography.*
[85] Heise, p. 45.

This suits Gombrich's celebration of Warburg as an exceptional talent within a solid tradition of humanist scholarship, but it does not exclude alternative explanations of Warburg's breakdown, including those which yoke that breakdown to anxieties surrounding Jewish identity and the wider question of ethnicity in the modern world. It is to these that we turn now.

4.3.3 Against Gombrich: Schoell-Glass on Warburg, Jewishness and anti-Semitism

The German scholar Charlotte Schoell-Glass is amongst those contemporary scholars who have sought to reverse a perceived deproblematisation of Warburg in intellectual history. She begins her book *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus* with a quotation from Goethe: 'Eine jede Idee tritt als fremder Gast in die Erfahrung und wie sie sich zu realisieren beginnt, ist sie kaum von Phantasie und Phantasterei zu unterscheiden'.[86] It can be found, she reports, in Warburg's *Nachlass*, on the back of a postcard dated July 1929 displaying the image of nothing less than the Warburg library itself.

Schoell-Glass writes,

> Der von Goethe formulierte Gedanke berührt jenen Grenzbereich der Kognition, in dem sich Warburg ein Gelehrtenleben lang bewegte, einen Grenzbereich, der sich wie ein schillernder Gürtel um die Felder des gesicherten, wohlgeordneten Wissens zieht – ganz gleich, auf welchem Gebiet sie liegen mögen.[87]

[86] Charlotte Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus: Kulturwissenschaft als Geistespolitik* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1998), p. 15.
[87] Ibid., p. 15.

In her book, she finds that the 'strange guest' of Goethe's epigram

> hat vielerlei Gestalt in Warburgs Lebenswerk. Er ist die Sicht des Ethnologen aufs Eigenste, er ist die Arbeit an der Sprache, bis sie als Mittel der Analyse dem Bild wieder anverwandelt ist, er ist die Fähigkeit, Disparates zusammen und zum Sprechen zu bringen; er ist aber auch die Kraft der Neuordnung des bereits durch Klassifikation in feststehend erscheinender Ordnung Vorgefundenen.[88]

The figure she presents is far more radical and unconventional than the subject constructed by Gombrich in his *Intellectual Biography.* In particular she emphasizes the importance of anti-Semitism for Warburg's intellectual development.

In the book, which forms the major part of her contribution to the study of Aby Warburg, Schoell-Glass argues that the art historian's later life, especially the years of the First World War and his mental breakdown in 1918, yields evidence of an ongoing anxiety about the position of Jews in European culture. Schoell-Glass plainly states: 'Für die Rezeption der Warburgschen Kulturwissenschaft seit nunmehr über einem halben Jahrhundert ist in den verschiedensten Bereichen diese eine Tatsache von zentraler Bedeutung: Aby Warburg und viele der Gelehrten in seinem Umkreis waren Juden.'[89]

Her book documents Warburg's various reactions to anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany, including personal correspondence, plans to publish on 'the Jewish question',[90] scholarly allusion and a vast quantity of documents and clippings ordered by categories including 'anti-Semitism', 'the Jewish question', 'Jews', 'race', 'victims', and 'ritual killing'.[91] Schoell-Glass convincingly argues that this mass of primary sources indicates that 'die Entstehung [Warburgs] Werks in einem bisher nicht

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[88] Ibid., p. 18.
[89] Ibid., p. 16.
[90] See ibid., pp. 134-6 on a proposed article by Max and Aby Warburg covering 'die Judenfrage'.
[91] Ibid., p. 121.

erkannten Ausmaß unter der Bedingung der jüdischen Herkunft gesehen werden muß'.[92] There are, of course, alternative interpretations of Warburg's work and his breakdown. In particular, Bernd Roeck's *Der junge Aby Warburg* lays emphasis on Warburg's loyalty to the Kaiser and devoted nationalism: for one who cleft so strongly to such values, the defeat of Germany and the downfall of its head of state could be personally devastating historical events.[93]

Schoell-Glass' study builds on the work of Liebeschütz and Gilbert discussed earlier. Liebeschütz's divergences from Gombrich, particularly, are emphasized: 'Warburgs Konzept einer Kulturwissenschaft wird [...] biographisch und wissenschaftshistorisch in anderer Weise in ihrem Umfeld gezeigt als in Gombrichs 'Intellektueller Biographie'. Während Gombrich genetisch vorgeht, sucht Liebeschütz nach Parallelen.'[94]

Avoiding the kind of normative ascription of Jewish identity which Gombrich appeared to fear, Schoell-Glass interprets Liebeschütz's Warburg as one for whom a positively defined Jewish identity was not simply a question of roots, 'genetic' linearity as embodied in Gombrich's choice between 'Western culture' and the 'culture of the ghetto', bur rather 'vielmehr der Ort einer nie endenden Beunruhigung', a 'niemals erreichte [...] Identität' which provided 'eine formative Kraft für die Interessen, Fragen und wissenschaftlichen Konzepte Warburgs'.[95]

Felix Gilbert had briefly commented in 1972 on the normative character ascribed to antiquity in Warburg's work:

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[92] Ibid., p. 16.
[93] Roeck, *Der junge Aby Warburg*, p.101. See also 4.3.2 above.
[94] Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus*, p. 42.
[95] Ibid., p. 41.

> There is no doubt that Warburg's unwillingness to find evolution, progress, or development in history is in contrast with the normative character which he ascribed to the classical world [...] There seems to me no doubt that the reason for this contradiction lies in Warburg's personal psychology, that it is related to his family background and the social situation into which he was born. [96]

Schoell-Glass expands on this account:

> Gilberts sozio-biographische Erklärung [...] kann unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Rolle des Antisemitismus erweitert werden: Der antiken Tradition in Europa als einer je latenten oder reaktivierten, aber immer wirkbereiten Macht im Sinne vorgeformter Bilder entspricht die ebensolang erscheinende, gleichermaßen immer bereitliegende Tradition des christlichen Judenhasses – ein Ur-Meter innerzivilisatorischer Barbarei, das zu jedem historischen Zeitpunk aktiviert und im übrigen problemlos auf andere Minoritäten übertragen werden konnte.[97]

Schoell-Glass builds on this approach to look at recurrent anti-Semitic tropes like the blood libel as having a Warburgian 'afterlife' in Western culture.[98] This is a different category of horror to the rhetorically psychologized demons to which Gombrich confined his study of the disturbances in Warburg's intellectual life; and psychologism, that key concept for Perry Anderson's critique of Gombrich, is at the heart of the issue Schoell-Glass takes with Gombrich's representation of Warburg.

Unlike Gombrich's coyly 'Haunted Reformation', Schoell-Glass examines Warburg's distress, although she is sensitive to the reality of his human suffering and, unlike Philippe-Alain Michaud's analysis of Warburg's 'nymph', refuses to treat that distress as a riddle to be solved in terms of intellectual history: 'Warburgs Krankheit wird hier nicht neuerlich metaphorisiert und mythisiert werden.'[99] Instead, in pragmatic terms, she considers the anxieties for a member of a prominent Jewish banking family at

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[96] Gilbert, 'From Art History', p. 390.
[97] Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus*, p. 22.
Ibid., pp. 94-101.
[99] Ibid., p. 23.

the time of the German empire's defeat, relocating Warburg's breakdown in a social and historical context.

From as early as 1916, anti-Semitic attacks on the Jewish banker and war financier Walther Rathenau were being printed in Germany. In 1919 the anti-Semitic *Deutschvölkische Schutz- und Trutzbund* was founded with some 200 000 members. This was only the largest and most important of a number of such organisations.[100] Aby Warburg's brother Max advised the postwar peace negotiations on finance; as Schoell-Glass notes, after Rathenau's murder in 1922, 'Max Warburg war zu dieser Zeit tatsächlich rund um die Uhr unter Polizeischutz gestellt. Seine Rolle als Finanzberater bei den Friedensverhandlungen hatte ihn womöglich noch mehr exponiert, als er es schon während des Krieges gewesen war.'[101]

Aby Warburg's fear of unknown assailants striking at his family, and a comment recorded in his mental health case file that he attacked his family because of the threat from Bolsheviks,[102] become more pragmatic than psychotic in the light of Schoell-Glass' demonstration of his sensitivity to anti-Semitism, even if the work of Roeck and the specific mention of Bolshevism suggests that Warburg's fear is equally plausibly that of a prosperous nationalist figure facing communist revolution.[103] Nonetheless, anxieties which Gombrich's account confines within Warburg's own psyche come to seem plausibly connected to both his immediate family and social life, and also broad cultural and political turns in early twentieth-century Germany.

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[100] Ibid., p. 152.
[101] Ibid., p. 157.
[102] UT, LBA, Aby Warburg Krankengeschichte, Box 441/3782, File 3, p. 25.
[103] See Roeck, *Der junge Aby Warburg*.

Schoell-Glass also indicates the sophistication and sensitivity of the intellectual resources which Warburg brought to the task of understanding ethnic identity, including his own complex sense of his Jewishness. She cites Carl-Georg Heise's reference to the *Giftschrank*, or poison chest, in which Warburg reputedly kept unscholarly texts in his library. Schoell-Glass offers us Heise's recollection of Warburg's comment, 'Man müsse, so schrie er fast, den Teufel präsent haben, ihn jederzeit zitieren können, um ihn mit den eigenen Waffen zu schlagen'.[104]

Charlotte Schoell-Glass connects Warburg's attributed words to the questions of ethnic identity which she perceives at the heart of his thought. Of the *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek* before the emigration, with its inclusion of racist material on its shelves, she writes:

> Eine Sammlung allerdings, die den Gobineau des *Essai sur l'Origine de l'inégalité des races humaines* dokumentiert, auf den unschwer Warburgs Diktum, daß man den Teufel präsent haben müsse, um ihn jederzeit mit seinen eigenen Waffen schlagen zu können, bezogen werden kann.[105]

Not only scholarship of a speculative quality – 'historical fiction' – but also work of a racist nature here becomes significant in taking exactly the kind of stand against ethnonationalist fantasies, combative rather than aloof, which 'the Republic of Letters' refused to make.

Schoell-Glass' approach resonates with that of Michael P. Steinberg, who makes a similar case that the 'conjunctions of personal and intellectual biography are decisive throughout [Warburg's] life'.[106] Where Schoell-Glass approaches Warburg through the issue of anti-Semitism, Steinberg prefers to read Warburg's work on an indigenous New

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[104] Heise, cited in Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus*, pp. 35-36.
[105] Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus*, p. 36.
[106] Steinberg, 'Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture', p. 67.

Mexican tribe in order to trace many of the same concerns in Warburg's emotional and scholarly lives.

4.3.4 Against Gombrich: Steinberg on Warburg and ethnicity, primitive and modern

No less critical of Gombrich than Schoell-Glass, Gilbert or Liebeschütz, the historian Michael P. Steinberg's encounter with Gombrich centres on his retranslation of Warburg's lecture on the Pueblo Indians, delivered at the Kreuzlingen clinic. It is accompanied by an essay in which Steinberg sensitively reads Gombrich's *Intellectual Biography* itself to draw out tensions and ambiguities within the representation of Aby Warburg.

Like many other recent writers on Warburg, Steinberg's approach does not absolutely exclude or denounce Gombrich's biographical work. He accepts, for example, an allegation by Gombrich that 'Warburg's distaste for gilded American modernity fit into a larger, developing discomfort with the formalist modes of art history in which he had been trained'.[107] However, Steinberg moves beyond Gombrich's analysis, and even beyond Matthew Rampley's caution that a view of Warburg as evolutionist must be tempered, to investigate and complicate accounts of the Hamburg art historian's relationship to the discourse on the 'primitive' and 'modern'.

[107] Ibid., p. 60.

Reading the Warburg of the 1890s, in particular his correspondence with anthropologists, Steinberg finds him initially 'operating within [an] evolutionary framework' which 'looks to "primitive" cultures for a shared proximity to a pure and prehistorical cultural ground zero' and which is associated with the names of 'Frazer, Freud, and Eliade'.[108] This approach, in Steinberg's account, informs Warburg's encounter with the Pueblo people of New Mexico, cultural-historical fieldwork 'motivated by a notion that the birth of modern culture and, a fortiori, of the modern cultural production of religious and aesthetic images [...] coincided with the mental and cultural capacity for the production of symbols'.[109] The process of modernisation involved the 'mental separation of human understanding and representation from the hidden actions of the divine and ultimately serves as the foundation for the increasing psychological distance (*Distanz*) of the human imagination from the divine'.[110]

Distanz allows *Denkraum* – the space for reflection. Steinberg lays great emphasis on this term as 'the value threatened by modernization which Warburg invokes at the end of the Kreuzlingen lecture'.[111] This lecture, delivered at Dr. Binswanger's clinic to doctors and patients as a kind of neck riddle by which Warburg demonstrated his regained capacity for mental self-control, deals not only with Warburg's contact with the indigenous peoples of New Mexico but also his childhood, Jewish identity and a very personal response to the condition of modernity. Gombrich's own biography depends on the lecture for its account of Warburg's response to his mother's illness of 1874, with its significant mention of 'Red Indians'.[112] Although Gombrich drew on the lecture notes to give an account of Warburg's childhood, his

[108] Ibid., p. 61.
[109] Ibid., p. 65.
[110] Ibid., p. 65.
[111] Ibid., p. 69.
[112] See 4.3.1 above.

biography is carefully constructed to maintain strict boundaries between the personal and the scholarly. As the end of his chapter on the lecture states:

> Warburg never intended this lecture to be published; on the contrary, he was deeply aware of its personal, indeed confessional, nature. Perhaps there is no more moving utterance among all Warburg's notes than the remark he appended to the draft of this lecture in which he protests against its description as 'a summary of the results of an anthropological expedition'.[113]

Gombrich recognizes the significance of the lecture, devoting considerable space to it, but explains it as the work of a mentally ill man regaining mastery over 'primitive' emotional disturbance and beginning his return to the domain of rational humanist scholarship. Steinberg suggests on the contrary that Warburg's lecture is a vital intellectual document of Warburg's 'mature phenomenological and emotional position on paganism', dispensing with the liberal evolutionism Steinberg identifies in Warburg's early years.[114] Distinguishing this lecture from the more traditional presentations on his travels which Warburg had given immediately on returning from the United States, Steinberg finds his subject at this point writing 'sometimes only symptomatically, sometimes with no border between a symptomatic voice and a scholarly one'.[115] It is of both personal and scholarly significance, Steinberg argues, that Warburg's lecture emphatically does not draw an evolutionist's distinction 'between primitivism and rationality but [rather one] between a dangerous enchantment and a decayed rationality [and...] chooses neither'.[116]

Steinberg's alternative account turns around Warburg's concept of *Denkraum*, space to reflect. Pointing out that Gombrich glosses Warburg's need for *Denkraum* as a 'tragic awareness of the threat' which the irrational can have for 'reason and reflection',

[113] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 226.
[114] Steinberg, 'Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture', p. 94.
[115] Ibid., p. 96.
[116] Ibid., p. 74.

Steinberg responds with a sensitive reading of Warburg's original words and Gombrich's translation to note that Warburg's motto 'Athen will eben immer wieder neu aus Alexandrien zurückerobert sein' speaks of rational Athens' complex desires, where Gombrich offers in English the unambiguous imperative that 'Athens must always be conquered afresh from Alexandria'.[117]

For Steinberg, 'personal and scholarly resolution' is found in the lecture 'not in the redemption of rationality over primitivism but in the rejection of such historical linearity and its attendant psychic and scholarly pressures altogether'.[118] He writes of the slides with which Warburg illustrated the lecture:

> Distance in space and time still separates epochs, but the images placed in dialogue overcome that distance just enough to posit associations that burst the myth of a grand, linear historical narrative with premeasured increments of cultural and temporal distance.[119]

This might seem a fancy of the interpreter, were it not for the fact that Warburg himself makes the intellectual bridges between the juxtaposed images, questioning the fate of the serpent, which represented lightning to the Pueblo people, in an age of 'telegram and telephone': 'Uncle Sam in a stovepipe hat [...] has wrested lightning from nature.'[120] This technique would accompany Warburg out of the psychiatric clinic and into the academy with his project *Mnemosyne*, an art-historical study dependent on the juxtaposition of anachronistic images.[121]

Steinberg explicitly acknowledges the challenge to Gombrich embodied in his juxtaposition of the 'symptomatic' and the 'scholarly' Warburg:

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[117] Ibid., p. 69.
[118] Ibid., p. 97.
[119] Ibid., p. 98.
[120] Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, p. 53.
[121] On this project, see Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, pp. 283-306.

> The problematic effect of [Gombrich's] fundamentally sensible charge [that academic studies should not intrude upon the terrain of Warburg's mental illness...] has been the tendency to duplicate Warburg's lifelong battle against his "demons" on the level of his intellectual work. In other words, the tendency has been to look at Warburg's view of culture in terms of his alleged projection of a straightforward path from the primitive, the pagan, and the irrational to the modern and the rational.[122]

Steinberg goes on to indicate that 'this is a questionable model for examining Warburg's thought (including the relation between his work and his own psyche); for it is a model of repression rather than one of "working through."' [123] Beginning with these references to repression and the apostrophized 'working through', Steinberg's essay imposes psychoanalytic discourse on Warburg's case. Of the dialectic between 'Athens' and 'Alexandria', Steinberg insists that it, specifically, 'must be understood in terms of the psychoanalytic notion of working through and, in a complementary way, in terms of an emerging cultural phenomenology'.[124]

He is supported in this by his attention to the career of Warburg's psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger, a figure who brought to his clinic 'a profound, but not uncritical, reception of Freudian psychoanalysis [...] critical of what he understood as the biologically drive-oriented composition of the Freudian personality and [striving] to treat and restore an existentially viable and complicated subjectivity'.[125]

Steinberg introduces the reader to Binswanger's promotion of 'existential psychology and existential phenomenology'.[126] Binswanger's distinctive approach was in part motivated by the publication of Heidegger's *Being and Time* in 1927, three years

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[122] Steinberg, 'Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture', p. 68.
[123] Ibid., p. 68.
[124] Ibid., p. 70.
[125] Ibid., p. 71. On Binswanger, see Franco Paracchini and Luigi Fraschini, *Il Prisma Binswanger: Lo psichiatra che amava i filisofi* (Milan: Mimesis, 2004).
[126] Steinberg, 'Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture', p. 71.

after Warburg left Binswanger's care, and to link Binswanger and Warburg in a discussion of the literary enterprise as self-realisation, Steinberg must draw on an essay by Paul de Man discussing much later work by Binswanger.[127] However, Steinberg acknowledges this limitation, admitting at one point that Warburg's encounter with Binswanger 'came in the post-Freudian, pre-Heideggerian period of [Binswanger's] career and thus merits further exploration'.[128]

Again, a model – here psychoanalytic, albeit sophisticated and self-critically so – is being imposed to conjure up the figure of Warburg himself. Of the countervailing approach, which discreetly avoids Warburg's breakdown of 1918, Steinberg comments, 'It is Gombrich's model, and it alludes, silently, to his own Popperian positivism and – a fortiori – to his antipathy to psychoanalytic constructs.'[129]

As should be clear from previous discussion, this is a highly reductive account of Gombrich's complex, independent and ambivalent relationships to both psychoanalysis and the thought of Popper.[130] It is in Steinberg's imposition of a psychoanalytic model that his study, like those of Michaud, Rampley and other scholars discussed above, substitutes a new representation of Warburg, still skewed to ally with a particular line of thought, for Gombrich's. Gombrich's vision is traded for one with a new agenda, perhaps more contemporary, but also no less shaped by its author's own concerns.

Nonetheless, Steinberg's contribution is particularly important for the thoroughness and sensitivity of its engagement with both Gombrich's and Warburg's

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[127] Ibid., p. 72.
[128] Ibid., p. 71.
[129] Ibid., p. 68.
[130] See 2.2.4 above.

writings, and also for broaching the issue of Warburg's personal identity, not just with reference to mental health but also to his Jewishness. Steinberg has written of Warburg that

> it seems certain that his critical and cultural passion derived from a lifelong refusal to delineate boundaries between self and other, personal and cultural – and this during a period when the abnegation of the ideology of cultural identity was not a popular intellectual alternative.[131]

The transgressive intellectual connections which Steinberg describes are, he reports, 'of particular importance when [Warburg's] own thinking about issues of primitivism and rationality is at stake'.[132] The link to the issue of Jewish identity raised also by Schoell-Glass becomes explicit when he writes that:

> A source of greater inner conflict for Warburg was his intransigent insistence that Judaism retained a primitive, pagan presence in the modern world. His attitude and his scholarship on the question of paganism thus necessarily converged with his attitude toward Judaism, Jews, and his own Jewish identity.[133]

Amongst Warburg's collection of wartime clippings and excerpts, Steinberg finds material which he can link to the lecture on the people of the Pueblo. One box among the Warburg *Nachlass* yields propaganda cards offering a message of German-Jewish solidarity. These include photographs of Jewish rituals observed and services performed on the battlefield; Russian vandalism recorded and condemned in images of destroyed Torah scrolls and damaged graves; and 'liberated' Jews pictured alongside imperial German 'saviours'. Steinberg devotes no small amount of space to these images and others from Warburg's personal collection, in particular 'collective passport

[131] Steinberg, 'Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture', p. 106.
[132] Ibid., p. 67.
[133] Ibid., p. 70.

photographs, taken by the Germans to identify groups of Jews, reflect[ing…] expressions of fear and suspicion' on the faces of their subjects.[134]

At this point, Steinberg offers 'a speculation that I cannot support but that seems too resonant to withhold', provoked by the resemblance between these images and photographs of Native Americans taken by H.R. Voth, 'some in the actual company of Aby Warburg':[135]

> In both cases, the camera creates primitiveness by recording an asymmetric exchange between, on the side of the observers, a culture of expansion, power, control, and professed intentions of liberation and, on the side of the observed, a culture seen, literally, as primitive and transformable.[136]

To the eyes of Steinberg's Warburg, both 'American Indians and the German Jews faced similar predicaments of assimilation and orthodoxy' in their respective encounters with the United States and Imperial Germany.[137] Steinberg suggests that Warburg, refusing to draw a line between 'primitive' peoples and those 'moderns' who objectify and designate them as such, 'senses a parallel between the Hopi and the Jews as primitives in an expanding word defined by economic, technological, and cultural modernization', and that this primitivism reflects not only upon those designated as *Ostjuden* but also well-established German Jews who maintained ritual practice.[138] This, as he points out, would include 'even […] the Hamburg Jewish community'.[139] At the same time, the Kreuzlingen lecture's guiding 'principle of redeeming ambivalence, through which paganism and rationality are allowed never to be reconciled but to exist in dialogue nonetheless', a principle of both intellectual and personal significance to the

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[134] Ibid., p.83.
[135] Ibid., p. 84.
[136] Ibid., p. 84.
[137] Ibid., p. 104.
[138] Ibid., p. 85.
[139] Ibid., p. 85.

'symptomatic' and 'scholarly' Warburg, means that Warburg is not denying his Jewish roots in making this case.[140] This is, of course, in stark contrast to Gombrich's own tendency to dismiss the significance of Jewishness in his own background.

As Steinberg states elsewhere, 'In question [when we discuss Warburg's scholarship] are both the fragmented subject and the diagnosis of Judaism in various historical manifestations – including even that of the Hamburg Jewish patriciate – as a vestige of cultural primitivism.'[141] Where Gombrich polarized the assimilated Jews of the city and those of the *shtetl*, Warburg's intellectual and personal move superimposes these figures. Such a move, implicitly, offers a response to the threat of anti-Semitism and ethnonationalism which neither rejects Jewishness outright nor chauvinistically affirms it. Steinberg writes that 'to neither the German Jewish predicament nor the American Indian did Warburg's attitude evince sentimentality'.[142] Although Warburg might have sympathised with a 'primitive' past on the retreat from disenchanted modernity, 'crucial to the movement of his argument is his retention of the notion of distance [...] Warburg's growing sympathy with a mythical or magical cosmology thus has nothing whatsoever to do with the nostalgia for an undifferentiated community'.[143] Steinberg's scholarship suggests to us that Warburg's vision of ethnicity can not be assimilated to to 'the preference for the primitive' which Gombrich criticized, nor to the blood-and-soil nationalism which Popper and Gombrich understandably despised; yet nor does it quite belong in the 'Republic of Letters' which some émigré scholars chose to construct in nationalism's place as the guarantor of their 'Central European' identity.

[140] Ibid., p. 99.
[141] Ibid., p. 77.
[142] Ibid., p. 104.
[143] Ibid., pp. 103-4.

4.4 The making of Gombrich's Warburg: approaches to an understanding

As we have seen, via both Steinberg and Schoell-Glass, Warburg's work can be read to find traces of a German-Jewish identity which provides an alternative, and a challenge, to the 'cosmopolitan' self-image being forged by Popper and Gombrich in their work, particularly after the Second World War.

Steinberg's essay touches on this conflict when he mentions Popper in relation to Gombrich's alleged antipathy to psychoanalysis, but it is to Schoell-Glass that we look now for a more provocative discussion of varying posthumous responses to Warburg's work and of the related issues surrounding Jewish identity.

In *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus,* Schoell-Glass contrasts Gombrich's Warburg with Gertrud Bing's comment, at the 1958 unveiling of Warburg's bust at the Hamburger Kunsthalle, that Warburg had never quite escaped 'die Furcht vor Antisemitismus'.[144]

Where Bing would acknowledge such emotional qualities in Warburg, Schoell-Glass contrastingly presents a Gombrich unwilling to investigate the effect on Warburg's scholarly career of his personal life and mental state. She writes that in Gombrich's 1966 Hamburg lecture,

[144] Bing, cited in Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus,* p. 33.

> Der Kunsthistoriker [...] besteht hier gegenüber dem legitimen Interesse der Biographen auf der Objektivität des Wissenschaftsprozesses, und es ist das Verdienst seiner 'intellektuellen' Biographie Warburgs, daß sie in diesem Punkt geleitet ist von sorgfältiger Trennung der Fakten und ihrer faktischen Bedingtheiten.[145]

Schoell-Glass takes issue with Gombrich's approach, offering her own premise explicitly opposed to (or, as she less combatively puts it, 'distanced from') that of the *Intellectual Biography:*

> Am Beispiel Aby Warburgs will sie zeigen, daß die Frage nach den Motiven des Wissenschaftlers und Gelehrten für seine Forschung und das mit ihr verknüpfte soziale Agieren nicht ausschließlich als in die Kompetenz der Psychologie fallend gesehen muß und daß diese Frage auch nicht auf das subjektiv Unvermittelbare zielt.[146]

However, Schoell-Glass does not explain the distinct difference in attitude between Gertrud Bing and Ernst Gombrich, who were working together on Warburg's *Nachlass* in the late 1930s. Nor can the roots of Gombrich's approach be anatomized within the parameters of her study.

To better understand Gombrich's Warburg, we must go beyond Schoell-Glass and look at the circumstances under which the young émigré first encountered the *Nachlass* and worked on it up to the publication of the 'definitive' *Intellectual Biography*. The archives of the Warburg Institute provide the necessary material. As we have already seen, archived correspondence demonstrates that the issues of Jewish identity which Schoell-Glass stresses and Gombrich avoids in their respective accounts of Warburg were very much alive in the era of emigration.[147] To form an understanding of Gombrich's biographical approach, we look once more to primary documents recording his encounter with the *Nachlass*. We find that the contestation and multiple

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[145] Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus*, p. 33.
[146] Ibid., p. 16.
[147] See 3.3 above.

interpretations of the figure and legacy – the *lieu de mémoire* – of Aby Warburg occurred not just in the wake of Gombrich's biography, but throughout the project which led to the 1970 publication. It did so under the pressure of various negotiations and conflicts: the filial loyalties of a Saxl or a Bing versus the professional ambitions of a Gombrich; the apparently declining relevance of Warburg's intellectual moment; differences between the Hamburg Institute's staff and newcomer émigrés, all exacerbated by the demands of emigration and postwar accommodation within their host society.

5.0 The genesis of the Warburg biography

As an outsider who came to the Warburg Institute in 1936 without ever having known the *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg*, Gombrich swiftly found that his concept of the Institute's project to posthumously publish on the life and work of its founder diverged from that of scholars who had known Aby Warburg personally, above all Fritz Saxl and Gertrud Bing. The minimising of the impact of Warburg's mental health issues and his Jewish identity in Gombrich's *Intellectual Biography*, analysed over the previous chapter, can be seen as the outcome of a series of emotionally charged debates, occurring in the context of emigration and running for more than 25 years among the Hamburg art historian's successors. Gombrich's own public account of these debates and discussions appears above all in the introductory sections of his Warburg biography, although this chapter will focus on the archive materials which variously support or challenge his narrative.

5.1 Gombrich's account of the biography's genesis

In the opening pages of the *Intellectual Biography,* Gombrich explains how he had originally been employed in London to provide a commentary for the plates of the picture atlas, *Mnemosyne.* He reports that it quickly became apparent to him that without an edition of Warburg's notes, the challenging atlas, with its thesis communicated through illustration rather than prose, would 'remain unintelligible to the

uninitiated'.[1] 'The intrinsic difficulties which stood in the way of the original project' consisted above all in the sheer quantity of material left by a scholar who

> never threw away a piece of paper. He wrote with great difficulty and he never stopped writing. A large proportion of his literary remains turned out to be drafts, jottings, formulations, and fragments abandoned on the way to the finished work.[2]

For the Gombrich of 1970, by the early 1940s,

> the distance I had gained through my enforced absence [in Evesham...] increasingly strengthened my conviction that Warburg's notes should not be published so much as used in a presentation of his ideas. I had started to work on these lines in the first month of the war and on finally returning to the Institute I proposed to continue in this way.[3]

This retrospective account is supported by material from the archives. In 1940 Gombrich wrote to Bing about the task of ordering the plates of the picture atlas in such a way that they formed a coherent intellectual statement:

> I hope you won't mind my being inquisitive and meddlesome but I was wondering all the while whether the plan to continue writing texts to the existing plates was really the most expedient one. Seeing my manuscripts it all came back to me why I had stopped and tried another line. I wonder whether you agree with me but I think that while the first plates are fairly uniform and straight the actual Renaissance plates from re-entry of Pathos on need some special care in re-arranging. It is perhaps not much use writing explanations to plates which one will have to re-arrange afterwards. [...] Unless one publishes the Atlas just as it is but absolutely philologically without any change at all I do not see how one will be able to avoid more drastic changes and "reshuffles"? Do you agree?[4]

In the last month of that year he continued to insist that the restatement of Warburg's ideas, or

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[1] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 3.
[2] Ibid., p. 3.
[3] Ibid., p. 3.
[4] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Ernst Gombrich to Gertrud Bing, 11th January 1940.

> what I call the "article" (in its present form or in a very different one) seems to me still more or less necessary, that is to say I believe that apart from the plates there should be something coherent by way of introduction explaining in a rather condensed form the history of the Mnemosyne within Warburg's life and work and [...] explanation of its make up and present stage. And I wonder whether this "essay" should not be as "self contained" as possible wherever one would then publish it.[5]

Again in late 1941, with a short piece by Warburg on Manet being considered for publication, Gombrich was pressing for a more general overview of Warburg's thought:

> You know how much I am in favour of an article on the Mnemosyne as such but this postscript idea seems to me rather to fritter away the chance without leading to much. We had quite a number of these half-solutions already [...] personally I would rather tackle the whole thing, gigantic as it is, tha[n] use it as a kind of quarry but – (dacapo al fine)[6]

According to the *Intellectual Biography*, work Gombrich did to build on this proposal in 1946-7 ultimately formed 'a large proportion' of the 1970 publication.[7] Archived drafts of this work dating from 1947-8, commented on by Bing and Saxl and discussed in the course of the current chapter, correspond closely to the ultimate structure and in places even final wording of the *Intellectual Biography*.

Gombrich in 1970 explained how the 1940s manuscript grew

> into the draft of a book which Saxl intended to publish [...b]ut in 1948 he died and new problems arose. It was decided that any presentation of Warburg's ideas would be incomplete without a picture of his personality, without a biography. It was clear from the outset that only one person was fitted to write this biography – Gertrud Bing. My presentation, so it was thought, should

[5] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Ernst Gombrich to Gertrud Bing, 18 December 1940.
[6] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Ernst Gombrich to Gertrud Bing, 28 September 1941.
[7] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 3.

therefore be shelved until it could be published as a second volume to accompany Gertrud Bing's authoritative *Life*.[8]

Gombrich's account informs us, however, that Bing's duties as Assistant Director and then Director outright of the Warburg Institute kept her from writing 'the biography for which we had all been waiting'.[9] He also reports that the work she did on the project after her retirement in 1959 so dissatisfied her that she destroyed it before her death in 1964.[10]

This occasioned the revival of Gombrich's project, first in 1966 with lectures in Hamburg and London celebrating the centenary of Warburg's birth, and then with the book of 1970. Gombrich writes that in the wake of Bing's attempt, 'one thing was clear; the criticism of those who had felt that Warburg's ideas could not be presented in a void and divorced from his personality and life was justified'.[11] Nevertheless, Gombrich represented himself less as a biographer than a historian. Although the book on Warburg is an account of that scholar's life, Gombrich writes of the 'biographical scaffolding which it would need to stand on its own' as if it were something external to his real interest and almost regrettable.[12] This is perhaps because 'biography' carried emotive and unscholarly connotations for one who subscribed to Gombrich's view of cultural history. In the London centenary lecture, he had made it clear that it was a close confidante of Warburg, Bing, who 'alone could have given us' an authoritative biography.[13] In his account of the tensions between Bing's work and his own during her lifetime, Gombrich contrasts Bing's 'identification with Warburg's outlook and

[8] Ibid., p. 4.
[9] Ibid., p. 4.
[10] Ibid., p. 4.
[11] Ibid., p. 4.
[12] Ibid., p. 5.
[13] Ernst Gombrich, 'Warburg Centenary Lecture', in *Art History as Cultural History*, pp. 33-54 (p. 34).

research which for her was a matter of course' with a 'critical detachment' of his own, which Bing 'was not always happy to notice'.[14]

The 'detachment' Gombrich achieved was not only from the *Nachlass* documents, but also from the Institute's ethos as articulated by those who had known its founder. Rather than present himself as belonging to the same peer group as Gertrud Bing and Fritz Saxl, who had inaugurated the project to posthumously publish Warburg's scholarship or related studies, Gombrich would continue to emphasize his remoteness from Warburg and his contemporaries over the course of his career.

For example, Gombrich's 1999 lecture 'Aby Warburg: His Aims and Methods' opens with a passage which is a curious reversal of the 1978 lecture in which Gombrich had claimed a continuous chain of 'living memory' connecting him to Schubert through a Viennese acquaintance who knew Schubert's close friend Franz Schober. As we saw, the Gombrich of 1978 there evoked the early nineteenth century as if it was a most recent, even near-contemporary, historical moment.[15] Contrastingly, in the 1999 lecture, despite the fact that Warburg died during Gombrich's lifetime and indeed after the young Austrian had begun the study of art history, a sense of detachment is maintained. In the published version, he writes that when Warburg died on 26 October 1929,

> I was at that time in my second year at Vienna University, studying the history of art, but I do not think that the news of his death reached me, or that I knew much about him, though my teacher, Julius von Schlosser, had a high regard for his erudition.[16]

In the London lecture celebrating the centenary of Warburg's birth, Gombrich virtually banished his subject entirely to the nineteenth century, speaking of the

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[14] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 4.
[15] See 2.2.5 above.
[16] Gombrich, 'Aby Warburg: His Aims and Methods', p. 268.

'distance [...] inevitably given to those of us who did not know a scholar in our field who was born a hundred years ago'.[17]

Gombrich also presented himself as being more 'detached', if not exactly objective, in his assessment of Warburg's scholarship, explicitly presenting this detachment in relation to Warburg's contemporaries:

> If I mentioned my disadvantage which I feel so keenly when I think of those who knew Warburg, I must console myself with a compensating advantage which I may have as a historian. I do not mean here the dubious advantage of greater objectivity. Nobody can be really objective. But objectivity is not quite the same thing as that detachment that comes from a sense of distance[.][18]

Here, 'detachment' seems to connote that sense of restraint Gombrich extolled as a virtue of the humanist cultural historian wary of 'turbulent' and speculative scholarship, but Gombrich is also writing of his real historical encounter with the Warburg *Nachlass,* and of his desire to remain 'detached' from what one might choose to call the 'turbulence' of emotional investment in Warburg's figure by those who had known him personally. In fact, the archive reveals that emotional 'turbulence' affected all those involved in the project to posthumously represent Warburg.

This chapter seeks to elucidate the differences between Gombrich, Saxl and Bing by chronicling the attempts of the Warburg Institute to produce a fitting textual representation of Warburg between his death and the Gombrich publication of 1970. We begin with a portrait of Warburg's closest associates, Bing and Saxl, and their agendas for the posthumous Warburg, examining also preliminary work done by Bing before the outbreak of the Second World War; with Gombrich present from 1936, we then examine his work on Warburg in the context of archived correspondence which reveals

[17] Gombrich, 'Warburg Centenary Lecture', p. 34.
[18] Ibid., p. 34.

fierce clashes, with Saxl in particular, over the future representation of Warburg. Later still, in the 1950s and 60s, Bing herself began a fresh project on Warburg which lends further emphasis to the dramatic difference in approach between her and Gombrich, and therefore to the limits of Gombrich's account. This late project by Bing is discussed here through readings of her archived correspondence with Gombrich and with Ludwig Binswanger, the psychiatrist who had treated Warburg many years before. The chapter concludes by considering the potential for a Warburg on Bing's model alongside archived material by Gombrich. This material by Gombrich powerfully demonstrates the impossibility of extricating the issues of emigration, ethnonationalism and personal concerns from his attempt to provide an account of Warburg and his scholarship.

5.2 Bing and Saxl: initial agendas for the posthumous Warburg

Bing and Saxl, although only slightly older than Gombrich, held a very different sense of who they were as scholars, 'Warburgians' and Central Europeans of Jewish background. Saxl in particular, the most senior member of the Warburg Institute, seems in both his intimate knowledge of Warburg and his perspective as a scholar of Central European Jewish background, to represent a different generation to Gombrich.

Saxl had first encountered the *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg*, then comprising 15 000 volumes, in 1911. Saxl reports in a memoir of the KBW's early years that it was a 'baffling' and 'most peculiar' collection, both in its devotion to then-obscure topics like astrology and in the ordering of its holdings, which shifted perpetually according to Warburg's latest ideas. Unlike Gombrich, Saxl had

encountered and been inspired by a collection that was still 'intensely alive' with the energy of its founder and his ongoing work.[19] When Warburg was interned for psychiatric treatment, Saxl became Acting Director of the library, and his priority is reported by Bing, in her *Fritz Saxl: A Biographical Memoir*, as having been to 'make [the Warburg library] accessible without blurring its personal character and layout'.[20] This motive had to be reconciled with integration into the University of Hamburg. Even before Warburg's death, the issue of negotiating a Warburgian tradition through heritage and memory had arisen for the Institute that bore his name. Saxl later recalled, 'The problem was to develop the heritage of an absent master and friend and to develop it without his guidance into something new in accordance with the circumstances within Hamburg's new educational system.'[21]

While Saxl's account modestly acknowledges the problem posed by the fact that not even Warburg's 'learning and interests [...were] as wide as those of a group of anonymous users of a collection [...whose] wishes are certainly legitimate',[22] Bing describes the challenge facing Saxl more starkly by conjuring the image of the antiquated Warburg library prior to its professionalisation:

> [It was] housed in Warburg's family home, filling heavily carved Italian bookcases along the walls of three living-rooms, one of which had been Warburg's study; but it had overflowed into the hall, drawing-room, pantry, basement and bathrooms. It had about 20, 000 to 25, 000 volumes, and there existed a rule-of-thumb catalogue fit only to refresh the memory of those who already knew the books. It gave shelf marks which were constantly changed as space had to be found for new acquisitions; and after a fashion still existing in many Italian libraries the slips had to be fastened with screws into deep, low, leather folders.[23]

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[19] F. Saxl, 'The History of Warburg's Library (1886-1944)' in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, pp. 325-338 (p. 327).
[20] Gertrud Bing, *Fritz Saxl (1890-1948): A Biographical Memoir* (London: Warburg Institute, 1998), p. 9. See also Dorothea McEwan, '"The Enemy of Hypothesis": Fritz Saxl as Acting Director of the Warburg Institute', *Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute*, XLIX (2004), pp. 75-86.
[21] Saxl, 'The History of Warburg's Library', p. 330.
[22] Ibid., p. 331.
[23] Bing, *Fritz Saxl*, p. 9.

Saxl himself explained that with incorporation into Hamburg University, there was a need

> to develop this intensely personal creation into a public institution. It was, however, obvious from the beginning how much would be lost by this undertaking [...] the extreme wealth of ideas which on the one hand made it the delight of the scholar but on the other hand made it difficult for him [*sic*] to find his way about.[24]

Still, the drive for what Saxl called 'normalisation' co-existed with an 'anxi[ety] to keep [Warburg's] arrangement unchanged except where it was so idiosyncratic as to be unintelligible.'[25] The extent to which Saxl succeeded in balancing the imperatives of 'normalisation' and fidelity to Warburg is demonstrated by the good fortunes of the KBW upon Warburg's return from mental hospital:

> What had been tentatively begun in the years of Warburg's absence was now carried on under his direction and with his help. He had [...] members of the staff who were at the same time University teachers. Seminars were held in the Institute and the student[s] trained to use its Library. Research and travelling subsidies were given. The staff – senior and clerical – was increased in number and properly organized. During vacations a number of distinguished scholars came to read. Books were purchased on a larger scale than ever before, and the Photographic Collection [...] was built up.[26]

The achievements of Saxl were great, but so were those of Gertrud Bing, who was employed to assist Warburg upon his return. It is clear from the few studies devoted to her work that Bing was a talented academic whose tireless support for her colleagues sometimes impeded her own research and publication. As one essay's writers put it,

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[24] Saxl, 'The History of Warburg's Library', p. 331.
[25] Bing, *Fritz Saxl*, p. 10.
[26] Saxl, 'The History of Warburg's Library', p. 334.

'Das Motto dieses Wissenschaftlerlebens hätte zu Recht lauten können: "Ich diene".'[27] However, the material she did produce – not least a strikingly interdisciplinary doctoral study on Leibniz and Lessing – was of the highest intellectual quality.[28] As we shall see later in this chapter, her published and unpublished comments on Aby Warburg himself are also significant and provocative contributions to the question of his posthumous representation. Above all, accounts of her life and career emphasise her devotion to Aby Warburg during the final of years of his life in which she served as his assistant. Bing, Saxl and Warburg seem to have enjoyed in the latter half of the 1920s a period in which the Warburg Institute's duties of fidelity to its founder and conformity to the institutional requirements of Hamburg University sat together comfortably.

The period of apparent harmony between personal legacy and institutional demands lasted a little while beyond Warburg's death in 1929. Saxl faced up to the challenge, described by Bing, of 'prov[ing] the value of what had been entrusted to him, and [...] demonstrat[ing] that it had a message for a wider circle and more than one generation of scholars'.[29] However, the year of Warburg's death was also that of the Wall Street Crash, and the ensuing international economic crisis brought the first pinch in a series of misfortunes which would lead to the KBW's flight from Germany within four years. Under the growing threat of Nazism, Saxl successfully arranged the transfer of the KBW to London as 'the Warburg Institute', supported by the Academic Assistance Council. We have seen in our discussion of Jewish identity in emigration how Saxl sought to promote the Warburg Institute within Britain and even stood up to his paymasters in the Warburg family to ensure that the Institute established roots in

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[27] Karen Michels and Charlotte Schoell-Glass, 'Die Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaftler Gertrud Bing (Hamburg 1892 – 1964 London)', in Elsbeth Weichmann Gesellschaft E.V., ed., *Frauen im Hamburger Kulturleben* (Hamburg: Christians Verlag, 2002), pp. 27-40 (p. 29).
[28] See Michels and Schoell-Glass; also, Bettina Götz, 'College Bing und Fräulein Doktor', in *Denkräume zwischen Kunst und Wissenschaft*, ed. by Silvia Baumgart and others (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1993), pp. 19-26.
[29] Bing, *Fritz Saxl*, p. 15.

London.[30] These roots did not develop without much effort on his part. In a lengthy and significant passage, Gertrud Bing describes the Second World War as a moment of the Warburg Institute's history in which its

> own future, and the existence of all those who hitched their wagon to its star, depended on finding a place for it in the academic life of the country. [...] What were the demands that the Institute could fulfil in England? It was vaguely known that it had a great reputation on the continent; but hardly anybody knew what its object really was. Saxl might have arranged to have Warburg's works or the most important of the Institute's publications translated into English; but there was not time to work to a long-term plan. Still less did he pin his faith on official contacts or influential friends; in fact, he rather shunned them. He tried to make himself useful and realized that, in these circumstances, he could not restrict his services only to those matters which he knew best how to do. Every visitor was welcome, whatever his business. No query was too trivial or too dilettantish for Saxl not to detect a grain of interest in it, or at least not to respond kindly to the questioner's dilemma.[31]

Bing's account is substantiated by the Warburg Institute archives discussed previously, which show her repeatedly informing Felix Warburg of the Institute's esteem amongst scholars and its media profile during the period of its establishment in London.[32] The private papers of Ernst Gombrich also yield a significant letter from Bing to Gombrich written in January 1945 and offering a wealth of good news on the Warburg Institute's embedding in London's academic life. With a degree of pride, Bing states:

> Daß die "Incorporation of the W.I. in London University" nun doch noch vor Jahresschluß unter Dach und Fach gebracht worden ist, werdet Ihr wohl aus den Times, oder Manchester Guardian, oder Time + Tide etc [wissen]...oder sollten Sie es am Ende auf dem European broadcast auf Englisch, Italienisch, Französisch und Hollandisch gehört haben?[33]

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[30] See 3.3.1 above.
[31] Bing, *Fritz Saxl*, p. 20.
[32] See 3.3.1 above.
[33] EHG, Gertrude Bing, Bing to '[the] Gombrichs', 2 January 1945.

Saxl is a key figure in this achievement, as Bing's report reveals first that London University had requested him to run a course on the history of the Italian Renaissance, 'was ist eigentlich das Netteste was unsere neue Situation bis jetzt produziert hat,' and then that Saxl 'gebeten worden [ist,] im Institut[e] of Historical Research einen Diskussionabend über historische Methode mit einem Vortrag über Warburg und das Institute einzuleiten – auch ein ganz erfreuliches Symptom!'[34]

Both Bing and a more recent member of the Warburg staff, Dorothea McEwan, have paid particular tribute to Saxl's efforts in their accounts of this moment in the Institute's history. McEwan writes

> It is a great achievement to turn a private library into a centre of excellence appreciated by the wider community. It must rank as an outstanding achievement to effect the same task twice in very different situations and in two different countries. But Fritz Saxl accomplished this in addition to producing his own research and guiding the work of other scholars.[35]

Bing's memoir of Saxl describes 1933 for the Institute in London as a

> situation [...] not unlike that of twelve years earlier. He had again to explain himself, to explore opportunities and to administer for the unseen. [...] Another ten years, and he would say, 'It almost seems a pity that the Institute is now finally settled. What fun it would have been to start all over again.'[36]

Bing's comments, and in particular the good-humoured quotation from Saxl, perhaps reflect the one-time Director's character and life experience as a person who had already lived through one 'war to end all wars', combining the demands of military service and academic research before returning from the international conflict straight to the daily business of academia. The robust attitude contrasts interestingly with Ernst

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[34] Ibid.
[35] McEwan, '"The Enemy of Hypothesis"', p. 75.
[36] Bing, *Fritz Saxl*, p. 19.

Gombrich's sense, as someone who had experienced war as devastation of one's childhood home, growing up in the appalling conditions of post-World War One Vienna and even going abroad to Sweden as a relief measure, that the interwar years had been a mere lull before the collapse of civilisation, with 'all the years we have lived through [doomed] to something next to meaningless'.[37]

Saxl also differed from Gombrich in his acknowledgement and acceptance of a connection to the *shtetl* via his Jewish cultural background. In *Fritz Saxl: A Biographical Memoir*, Bing declares, with no doubt or ambivalence, that Saxl was both aware of and influenced by a personal Jewish tradition. Bing explains that 'Saxl came of [*sic*] one of those Central European Jewish families for whom Vienna used to be the first stage on the road to emancipation'.[38] Saxl would visit grandparents in Bohemia as a child and

> was thrashed in turn by German boys for being a Jew and Czech boys for being a German [...b]ut he remembered with pleasure that his grandfather used to study the Talmud in a back room during leisure hours spared from making a scant living: to seek refuge in learning seemed to him a dignified way of turning one's back on the hardships of life.[39]

This, of course, closely resembles the trajectory of Jewish 'assimilation' posited by Steven Beller and contested by Gombrich in 1996. This is especially clear when Bing goes on to report of Saxl telling her that his father, in assimilating into the predominant Christian society, 'found other channels for that taste for learning which the tradition of Talmudic exegesis and the study of Jewish law and faith often imparts to its heirs'.[40] Saxl seems to have seen no distinction between his own identity as an émigré scholar and the religious Jewish identity of his ancestors, to the extent of

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[37] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Ernst Gombrich to Gertrud Bing, 14 September 1939.
[38] Bing, *Fritz Saxl*, p. 1.
[39] Ibid.,, p. 1.
[40] Ibid.,, p. 1.

fantasising about recreating his grandfather's idealized study. His dream, according to Bing, was 'of a retired old age when he would work on his manuscript catalogues in the back room behind a delicatessen shop which was to provide him with a bare minimum of subsistence'.[41]

Although Bing's feelings regarding this aspect of her identity are less clear, the fact that she devotes no little space to it in her account of Saxl's life suggests at the least a difference of perspective from Gombrich.

These, then, were Gertrud Bing and Fritz Saxl, the key players in the early years of the project to memorialize and perpetuate the intellectual legacy of Aby Warburg beyond his death. At the beginning of the 1950s, with Saxl besieged by the practical demands of directing the Institute through turbulent times, it fell to Bing in the first instance to begin the work of researching and representing the Institute's founder.

5.2.1 Bing, Binswanger and early approaches to a Warburg biography

In the immediate wake of Warburg's death, senior staff of the Warburg Institute recognized the need for some kind of biographical work on the man. Bing, in her editorial foreword to a collection of Warburg's writings published in 1932, would acknowledge the importance of a 'detailed biographical study of Warburg, which would have the task of tracing the close interweaving of the scholarly and the personal aspects of his life' and of 'bring[ing] to light his unique methodology, his way of thinking, and

[41] Ibid.,, p. 35.

his personality'.[42] These were intended as successor ventures to the 1932 collection, but the archive demonstrates that Bing had already begun working on them in earnest two years before its publication, as well as giving more specific detail as to how Bing intended to approach these problems.

Letters, written by Bing and held in the archives of Ludwig Binswanger's clinic, indicate that her early 1930s researches offered an alternative way of understanding Warburg that, in particular, would have given more attention to issues of mental disturbance than Gombrich later would.

Bing was assisted in this aspect of her research by the close relationship, both in intellectual and social terms, of Binswanger and the KBW staff. Binswanger would affirm that Warburg remained of contemporary relevance to him both as a personal acquaintance and as an intellectual or even spiritual force long after his death, and even beyond the KBW's departure for London.

The strength of the relationship between Binswanger and the Warburg Institute staff is evident from the outset of their archived exchange of letters. Warburg seems to have provided a clear personal and intellectual inspiration for the Swiss-based psychologist. In a letter of 28 July 1930 to Fritz Saxl, Binswanger thanks the KBW director 'dass Sie mir auch nach dem Tode unseres lieben Professors die Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg schicken', but he also writes of Warburg himself that 'Ich denke oft an ihn, vermisse ihn, und würde mich sehr freuen, Sie bei einer Schweizerreise wieder

[42] Gertrud Bing, 'Editorial Foreword', in Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, pp. 81-87 (pp. 81-83).

einmal hier begrüssen zu dürfen und mit Ihnen über unsern Freund sprechen zu können'.[43]

This combination of intellectual and personal exchange continues throughout Binswanger's correspondence with Saxl, who had often visited Warburg at the clinic on the Bodensee during his treatment. On 25 November 1931, Binswanger writes requesting a copy of a Warburg Institute article which he feels might be useful for his own work,[44] and a few days later there is an enclosure accompanying another letter to Saxl:

> 2 Aufsätze, die beide irgendwie doch auch in den Rahmen der Bibliothek Warburg passen, besonders der über Traum und Existenz. Ich bin sehr betrübt, dass der Professor sie nicht mehr lesen kann, wie er mir überhaupt auf Schritt und Tritt fehlt.[45]

The radically interdiscplinary potential of the 'Warburg Institute' in its pre-exile incarnation is suggested by Binswanger's offer of his own psychological writings to the KBW, as well as by his close attention to the Institute's published proceedings – on one later occasion, he wrote swiftly when he did not receive a copy of the latest edition.[46] Binswanger was a practising clinical psychiatrist with a broad approach to understanding and treating the human mind, not a technical psychologist of perception of the kind Gombrich's 'interdisciplinary' art history would draw on. While Gombrich's psychology concentrated on 'the image and the eye', Binswanger's approach raised questions about how historical actors thought and felt. Gombrich, of course, preferred to subsume these to a broadly defined humanism and the 'logic of situation'. Saxl encouraged Binswanger's ongoing interest in KBW thought; on 8 December he replied

[43] UT, LBA, General Correspondence (GC), Box 443/39, Ludwig Binswanger to Fritz Saxl, 28 July 1930.
[44] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/39, Binswanger to Saxl, 25 November 1931.
[45] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/39, Binswanger to Saxl, 4 December 1931.
[46] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/41, Binswanger to Saxl, 12 July 1933.

to the psychiatrist: 'Tun Sie mir nur bitte einen Gefallen, und lassen Sie es mich immer gleich wissen, wenn Sie irgend etwas von unseren Studien interessiert. Ich werde auch dafür sorgen, dass Ihnen jeweils rechtzeitig Mitteilung von den Neuerscheinungnen zugeht.'[47]

In his enthusiastic response to KBW materials, Binswanger would directly invoke Warburg, his memory, and his intellectual contributions:

> Ich danke Ihnen sehr für die freundlichen Uebersendung Ihres mich ausserordentlich interessierenden Vortrages, der mich wieder ganz in die Gedankengänge unseres lieben Freundes Warburg zurückgeführt hat. [...] Ich empfand wieder nach der Lektüre Ihres Vortrages, wie notwendig es für mich wäre, einmal nach Hamburg zu kommen, mit Ihnen zu reden und die Bibliothek kennen zu lernen; ich werde Sie eines Tages doch einmal überfallen.[48]

The 'gegenwärtig' nature of the posthumous Warburg is vital to understanding this moment in the history of the biographical project. The KBW was still based in Hamburg, and Warburg's presence lingers even in correspondence with an immediacy which would be apparently unimaginable for Gombrich, with his sense of 'detachment'.

Responding on Saxl's behalf to a letter received in his absence, Bing first wrote to Binswanger introducing herself in the late summer of 1930:

> Es drängt mich beim Lesen Ihrer Zeilen, Ihnen zu sagen, was ich schon lange vorhatte, dass ich nämlich sehr gerne einmal zu Ihnen kommen möche, nicht nur um über den Professor zu sprechen, sondern auch um zu einer evtl. Biographie Ihre wertvollen medizinischen und psychologischen Beobachtungen zu erfahren. Mir ist dieses ein umso lebhafterer Wunsch, als der Professor selbst in der letzten Zeit immer wieder anempfohlen hat, doch einmal zu Ihnen zu fahren, um die Umgebung zu sehen, in der er soviele Jahre gelebt hat, und die Bekanntschaft eines Freundes zu machen, von dem er so unendlich viel gehalten hat.[49]

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[47] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/39, Saxl to Binswanger, 8 December 1931.
[48] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/40, Binswanger to Saxl, 22 March 1932.
[49] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/39, Gertrud Bing to Binswanger, 1 August 1930.

Where Gombrich would emphasize scholarly 'detachment' from the work and life of Aby Warburg, Bing here conflates not only medical and psychological observations with her study of Warburg, but also the 'atmosphere' of the Kreuzlingen clinic and the friendship that existed between doctor and patient. Binswanger responded positively to Bing's inquiry:

> Selbstverständlich stehe ich Ihnen jederzeit gerne zur Verfügung. Wenn Sie einmal mit der Biographie soweit sind und meine Mitarbeit brauchen, bin ich gerne dazu bereit. Ich müsste nur die Einwilligung der gesamten Familie dazu bekommen, woran aber kaum zu zweifeln sein wird.[50]

Binswanger's proposed visit seems never to have occurred, and by mid-1933 Saxl acknowledged that, 'Was die Zukunft der Bibliothek betrifft, so kann ich noch nichts Definitives sagen. Ich persönlich habe natürlich, trotzdem ich im Kriege war, die Professur niedergelegt'.[51] Nonetheless, the correspondence – and the lingering phantom of Warburg – continued to unfold across the space between London and Kreuzlingen. On 6 October 1939, in response to Saxl's sending of material by Warburg – presumably the 'serpent lecture' – Binswanger wrote that

> It interested me greatly, both in [*sic*] concerning the matter, as in [*sic*] concerning the personality. In reading it, many memories of our Freu[n]d came back to me, he told me often about his journey to America. I am very glad that you have published the lecture, it establishes a very important and disclosive document on the manner of thinking and working of our dear professor, and his whole spiritual development [.][52]

Here, as Binswanger discusses Warburg's 'whole spiritual development' alongside his 'manner of thinking and working' and his illness, the remembered Warburg – Warburg's *lieu de mémoire* – figures as a bridge between the scholarly,

[50] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/39, Binswanger to Bing, 4 August 1930.
[51] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/41, Saxl to Binswanger, 14 July 1933.
[52] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/46, Binswanger to Saxl, 6 October 1939.

personal and pathological. It offers us, from the primary source of the archives, something that Michael P. Steinberg would later achieve only by carefully unpicking Gombrich's published and authoritative representation of the man.[53]

Warburg would continue to be invoked as a kind of patron spirit wherever such bridges were required for Saxl and Binswanger, even in the most intimate of affairs. Scarcely a month before the British declaration of war on Germany, Saxl had written to Binswanger from London seeking personal medical advice about his son.[54] Binswanger's response, it seems almost inevitably, includes Aby Warburg's name – indeed in the very same sentence in which Binswanger offers counsel regarding Saxl's son:

> Es tut mir sehr leid, dass Sie so grosse Sorgen mit Ihrem Sohn haben und es wurde mich jederzeit sehr freuen, wenn ich Ihnen mit meinem Rat behilflich sein könnte, denke ich doch sehr gerne an unsere Zusammenarbeit bei unserem unvergesslichen Freunde, [A]by [W]arburg zurück. Sie wissen gar nicht, wie oft ich an ihn denke, und wie gegenwärtig er uns allen ist.[55]

But if Warburg was so relevant for the scholarly generation of Bing, Saxl and Binswanger that he could not escape mention even in the most personal correspondence, a younger scholar was soon to make his mark on the project to posthumously represent Aby Warburg – a scholar who, although he felt loyalty to an Institute which had effectively saved him from Nazi persecution, held no personal intimacy with Warburg himself, and was motivated as much by professional ambition as devotion to the Hamburg art historian and his intellectual legacy.

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[53] See 4.3.4 above.
[54] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/46, Saxl to Binswanger, 9 August 1939.
[55] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/46, Binswanger to Saxl, 5 September 1939.

5.3 Gombrich and the *Nachlass*

Little archived material remains from the first years of Gombrich's work on the Warburg *Nachlass* (1936-1939). With all the principal actors working within the same building, correspondence regarding the project was kept to a minimum.

After these initial years of close collaboration on the Warburg *Nachlass*, however, the outbreak of war and Gombrich's enlistment with the BBC's monitoring service brought about not only an increased level of correspondence but also a change in approach to the Warburg project. On Christmas Day, 1939, Bing wrote to Gombrich, requesting his notes and materials relating to the work and announcing:

> I am going to reduce my work at the Institute to the unavoidable minimum and to get on to Warburg things with a vengeance. What do you say to that? It is ridiculous, I know, that there should have to be a war and you employed on an absolutely different job to make me realise my responsibilities. But there it is. The diffidence in view of the task under which I have been suffering all these years seems so egotistical the moment you are faced with the question: now or never. If I am only able to do it badly, worse luck. But done it should be, and it seems I am the one to do it after all. I am sorry that w[e] shall not be doing it together, though I know it is largely my fault that we do not. But I shall count on your help and advice.[56]

The two scholars continued to exchange materials over the years of the war. Receiving a 'new instalment' of an introductory essay by Gombrich, Bing wrote in February 1940 that 'I am getting quite excited again on all that concerns the Atlas', although she was unwilling to pass comment on his own work 'because I am so

[56] EHG, Gertrude Bing, Bing to Gombrich, 25 December 1939.

involved in my own ideas that I should like to get them straight before going into your part'.[57]

The marked change in attitude and approach between Gombrich and Bing is best shown by the candid correspondence the Viennese émigré held with his friend and mentor Ernst Kris as he contemplated returning from war duties in Evesham to the *Nachlass* project. The USA-based Kris seems to have served as confidant for Gombrich's most aggrieved comments on the state of affairs at the Warburg Institute. The close relationship of 'the two Ernsts' allows for candid articulation of sometimes highly critical attitudes to the senior figures of the Warburg Institute and in particular work on Aby Warburg's personal legacy.

The Gombrich-Kris letters have already shown how Gombrich's career plans as a scholar were shaped by ongoing concerns over his position as an 'alien' in wartime Britain.[58] These concerns continued into the postwar period. In a letter of 23 September 1945, sent from Evesham, Gombrich weighed up the benefits and disadvantages of academic work versus radio monitoring in the postwar world, concluding with a direct appeal to Kris: 'Should I stay with the BBC, earn well and be bored, or go to the Warburgs, earn little and be agreeably exasperated?'[59]

Weighing up his options, Gombrich acknowledges his need to root himself in British society in a manner that echoes the need of Saxl and his staff to do the same for the Institute itself:

Among the things in favour of the BBC is the position of aliens in

[57] EHG, Gertrude Bing, Bing to Gombrich, 19 February 1940.
[58] See 3.3.2 above.
[59] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 September 1945.

> this country. It is likely to be precarious in the period of reconversion and this would be a job where the employment of aliens is specifically provided for (the Labour Ministry ruling is that aliens must not be employed on jobs which can be filled by British people). I do not think that the problem would be serious in the case of a Research Fellowship so intimately connected with the publishing of Warburg's German MS but it may be serious in other respects, (conceivably naturalisation prospects)[.] Among the things in favour of Warburgs [*sic*] is that I have now reached the Patriarchal age of 36, have spent six years listening to broadcasts and done little else and, therefore, if I still want to embark on a career of learning it is roughly the last chance.[60]

In this letter, Gombrich is uncertain whether the Warburg Institute is necessarily the best place for him, either from the perspective of the British Labour Ministry, or – more significantly – of his scholarly ambitions, as he writes of Fritz Saxl's promise of a three-year fellowship:

> You will se[e] that the Warburg Institute is as muddled an affair as ever but there is a chance of turning this instrument to some proper use if only one has the time and strength of purpose to do so. Saxl, of course, will do what he can to prevent one from working because he is always full of new schemes, queries and ideas which make him forget the old ones. On the other hand he said that he realised it was very little money and that he therefore proposed to give me full freedom during these three years to follow my imagination (with the vague proviso that I continue working on Warburg's literary bequest). I would have no routine duties, a thing which is both very tempting and slightly dangerous. The main danger[s], to put it briefly, are the temptations of journalism which are enhanced through the money one can get for articles or even books; and I shall need that money if I take the job.[61]

The perspective that the junior scholar presents here contrasts interestingly with the account given early in this chapter. Where previously we have considered Saxl's dynamism as a potentially necessary tool to keep the Warburg Institute alive in emigration, here, Saxl's constant innovation and drive to find new clients and purposes for the Institute are seen as a hindrance to producing scholarship of substance. Gombrich's phrase 'some proper use' hints at a growing ambition to develop his own intellectual approach beyond the existing KBW traditions. Kris' response is to reassure

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[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.

Gombrich both of his career potential and his ability to overcome even the demands of journalism. He admits to Gombrich that embarking 'on a university career, you would, I feel, have to do a certain amount of educational writing', but goes on: 'I trust this would not corrupt you.'[62] He sums up:

> [I]f you decide to become an expert in intelligence work, you will be outstanding in it, and [...] should you decide to return to academic work, you will, in very few years, be the first in your field. I have seen many people of every description and gifts these last five years and my teaching activity brings me in contact with a fair cross section of the gifted intelligentsia of this country. There are none of your calibre anywhere around.[63]

There is even a prospect of achieving high academic rank: 'Furthermore, who else should take over the Warburg Institute in say ten years or even earlier?'[64]

These concerns would come to affect directly Gombrich's engagement with the posthumous Warburg, by virtue of the fact that study of the Warburg *Nachlass* was his principle role in the early postwar years at the Warburg Institute. Once Gombrich had resolved himself to go on with an academic career, he resumed work on the *Nachlass* – 'in earnest', as he puts it, by the time of his letter to Kris dated 22 December 1945.[65] As his earlier letter had suggested, working at the Institute was linked to a proviso – however vague – to go on with the work on Warburg himself. Gombrich's professional uncertainties about the Institute lingered, however, with the 'outsider' quality he later emphasized in telling the story of his biographical project evidenced by some of his letters to Kris.

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 22 December 1945.

Although he would later write of unhappiness 'at the idea of having to return straight away to that old and well-thumbed Warburg Nachlass again and at seeing emerge side by side with it, a whole Gombrich Nachlass of drafts and notes',[66] in December 1945 Gombrich vowed 'to see that thing through with as much brutal efficiency as I command regardless of Bing's qualms of piety and Saxl's fickle scheme-making'.[67] A subsequent letter makes it clear that this determination stems in part from 'the moral obligation, which, after all, I have in this matter – for without your idea of recommending me to Saxl for the Nachlass I would probably have landed in Auschwitz or somewhere'.[68] The reader is reminded of Gombrich's narrow avoidance of the fate of Jean Améry, who was stripped of his identity as a *Gebildeter*.[69] In this quotation, however, it is not some vague or general aspect of *Bildungskultur* which has served as Gombrich's lifeline, but specifically the personal papers of Aby Warburg.

This obligation created by this debt, however strong, differs importantly from the personal devotion to Warburg characteristic of the correspondence of Saxl and Bing, and indicates a divergence of thought with regard to the Institute's founder. Gombrich gradually developed his own independent perspective on Warburg's scholarship, finding 'that my six years[']' absence had given me some wholesome distance to the things (while not causing me to forget them) and [...] furthermore, that these years of practical work have made me a bit more ruthless and 'expeditif''.[70]

In December 1945, Gombrich announced:

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[66] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 March 1946.
[67] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 22 December 1945.
[68] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 March 1946.
[69] See 3.2 above.
[70] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 March 1946.

> I have dropped the fiction that the work as such can be 'edited' – there is[n']t enough there to warrant such a process and I am going to write *on* Warburg's ideas in a detached historical manner. There are sufficient fascinating and stimulating ideas there to warrant such a procedure and in the process I hope to show what it was all about and why he amassed these books.[71]

'My starting point,' Gombrich goes on, 'is Warburg's "Symbolbegriff" which I shall try to explain in the setting of late nineteenth century German Geistesswissenschaften.'[72] Almost three months to the day later, however, he wrote to Kris having

> dropped my first plan of restricting the first publication to a paper on Warburg's Symbolbegriff. I had a long talk with Saxl and we decided to make it simply a book on Warburg's work based on both his published and unpublished writings. This, I think, makes sense, can be done, and can even be worth doing. Any of his notes and aphorisms not quotable in the text can then always be given in a nice appendix. I find this work rather useful to re-introduce me to the problems of method and approach, since I shall try to place Warburg into his historical setting. In fact this is, of course, indispens[a]ble, since his interpretation of the Renaissance only makes sense within the context of his historical position. Accordingly I am reading Burckhardt, Walser, Lamprecht (who was one of Warburg's teachers), but also Symmonds [*sic*], Pater etc.[73]

The promise to investigate historical context, and the tantalising list of names concluding this quotation, suggest a project far more impervious to the criticisms Karl Liebeschütz and Felix Gilbert, in particular, would cast against the *Intellectual Biography*.[74]

A subsequent letter includes an outline of the book's structure which cleaves remarkably close to that of the 1970 publication:

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[71] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 22 December 1945.
[72] Ibid.
[73] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 March 1946. On Pater (1839-1894), see Laurel Brake, 'Walter Pater' in *Key Writers on Art: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 230-236. On Symonds (1840-1893), see *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire*, ed. by John Pemble (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000). On Ernst Walser, see Paul Shorey, 'Gesammelte Studien zur Geistesgeschichte der Renaissance', *Classical Philology*, 28 (1933), 70-71.
[74] See 4.2.1 above.

> At present I plan to start the book with a sketch of the situation of historical research in 1890 when W. graduated, sketching a.) the Renaissance picture, b.) the position of psychology (which plays a big part in his early notes); I may try to draw a parallel (in Wbgs favour) to Berenson's 'tactile' psychology etc. Then I'll discuss Warburg's principal writings, The Botticelli, the Flanders-Florence, things, the Sassetti, the Astrological things and their context, and then his return or attempted return to the systematic approach and to psychological 'first principles' and his re-interpretation of his findings (in the Nachlass) in terms of philosophy of the image, and of a mnemic interpretation of history. This ought to work, don't you think so?[75]

Gombrich's outline corresponds quite closely to the draft materials, dating from 1947-8, which he would deposit with the Warburg Institute Archive in 1996. On a loose page appended to these deposits, Gombrich explains:

> On pp. 3-4 of the Introduction to my book on Aby Warburg I explained that it had been the original intention that I should write a presentation of Warburg's ideas, based on his notes, while Gertrud Bing would write his biography. I also state that I submitted the drafts of these chapters to her and that this would be followed by a debate between us. The enclosed typescripts are these chapters written in 1946-1947 together with Gertrud Bing's comments written on the pages – but not, of course the record of our further exchanges. It will be seen that most of these were incorporated in the final "intellectual biography" though heavily edited and also in some cases, radically shortened. This applies in particular to the chapter on Warburg's philosophical notes.
>
> I should like to deposit these early drafts with Gertrud Bing's comment[s] in the archives of the Warburg Institute to clarify the genesis of my book which has not always been presented correctly or fairly.[76]

Although it is not clear which accounts Gombrich is objecting to, it is certainly true that these valuable documents complicate any straightforward or melodramatic polarisation of the differing agendas being brought to the posthumous scholarly representation of Warburg. These archive papers can pull the reader's sympathies in different directions. At points, one might feel for Gombrich, facing as he is an exacting editor who, by virtue of having known the thesis' subject personally, can state with impunity that 'I am not sure whether Wbg would have spoken of the polarity of the

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[75] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 March 1946.
[76] WIA, AWI, 1, unpaginated loose sheet dated 'March 1996'.

classical influence'[77] and, more bluntly: 'This would not have been Wbg's opinion.'[78] Equally, Bing's comments reflect the understandable frustration of one who has lived and worked alongside a historical figure and who now watches that figure being portrayed and analysed purely through a 'detached' academic reading.

Marginalia, principally the comments of Bing but also those of Saxl, interact with Gombrich's writing over points ranging from the mundane, as two native German-speakers dispute English grammar or phrasing, to disputes over the very nature of visual images and their power. While Bing does not often oppose Gombrich's account outright in her comments, they do show her as being keen to emphasize the original and unusual in Warburg's work. Often this involves moving beyond the conventions of reasoned scholarship. A note on Gombrich's draft chapter 'Between Magic and Logic' emphasizes Warburg's attention to astrology as a bridge between 'mathematics[,] the most delicate instrument of abstract reasoning, and fear of demons, the most elementary form of religious causation'.[79]

Both Saxl and Bing resist Gombrich's suggestion that Warburg's notion of *Nachleben der Antike,* the afterlife of antiquity or of 'the primitive', served to underpin the historical changes of the Renaissance with a sense of continuity stemming from the classical period, a thesis which seems to anticipate Gombrich's own mature art history of technical innovations within a continuous tradition. Saxl's comment is that 'Reformation and Revolution are dangerous notions in describing Wbg's ideas,'[80] which Bing further glosses: 'I agree with Saxl in not quite liking the words Revolution and

[77] WIA, AWI, I, I.13.
[78] WIA, AWI, K, K.2.
[79] WIA, AWI, L, unpaginated slip.
[80] WIA, AWI, H, H.1.

Reformation. I do not think Continuity [*sic*] as such mattered to Wbg';[81] 'I do not think this [continuity] mattered very much to him.'[82]

Bing similarly resists attempts to paint Warburg as purely a devotee of the most famous Renaissance artists. In an early chapter, Gombrich argues that Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael's 'great vision of man, their 'Olympian' beauty was to Warburg the symbol of all that was valuable in the Renaissance. It was a value which transcended aesthetic merit and came to stand for true humanism as such'.[83] Bing responds: 'This is the first point with which I disagree on principle. Just as there was "der ewige Indianer im Menschen" there existed for him an eternal Olympian...But that stage could be reached at all times.'[84] She offers the examples of Masaccio and Piero della Francesca as figures who were 'quite as much the protagonists of the drama as the Three Big Ones (to none of whom he had a close relationship).'[85]

Bing's emphasis is almost always on the unusual and original aspects of Warburg's work. She takes particular trouble in her comments to differentiate his complicated and psychological approach to cultural history from 'present-day emphasis on "society" versus the individual'.[86] When Gombrich writes of Warburg opposing his contemporaries' idealized vision of the individual artistic genius through 'emphasis on social phenomena rather than on individuals', Bing confesses this 'make[s] me feel a little uncomfortable because it is open to misunderstanding'.[87] Later, in the draft's conclusion, Bing writes that to portray Warburg researching art as a concrete product of a well-defined social situation, as she feels that Gombrich does, 'savours too much of

[81] WIA, AWI, H, unpaginated slip.
[82] WIA, AWI, H, H.19.
[83] WIA, AWI, 1, A.13.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] WIA, AWI, G, G. 4.
[87] Ibid.

[Frederick] Antal [(1887-1954)]', and calls for Gombrich to find a 'better word' than social.[88]

Here, the primary sources complicate Perry Anderson's thesis of a conservative migration. Anderson's 'Components of the National Culture' depicts Antal rather sympathetically as 'a social historian of Florentine painting [...who] was kept outside the university world' in contrast to the 'canonized' Gombrich, but Bing's comment is open to multiple interpretations, not all of which suit Anderson's thesis.[89] For example, Antal's name might be a 'dirty word' among 1940s Warburgians with which Bing can chastise Gombrich; Gombrich's vision of Warburg might genuinely echo Antal at this point; or Bing might simply be seeking to avoid Warburg's original intellectual contributions being subsumed to Antal's contemporary version of art history. These possibilities need not reflect the ideological polarities used by Anderson.

Whatever the case may be, the issue of Warburg's originality had been the cause of dispute on Gombrich's part for some time. Complaining to Kris in 1946 that whatever he wrote on Warburg, Saxl and Bing 'always find some reason why they will postpone and prevent publication', Gombrich went on

> Not [that] I can really blame them, the more I know about Warburg the more embarrassing he somehow becomes. It seems that he was infinitely less original than even I had thought, he is a patchwork of ideas and catch phrases from such impressive thinkers as - - [August] Schmarsow [(1853-1936)] or Lamprecht. But I don't mind these things as I learn something about the poverty of our so[-]called 'science' and the shakiness of its foundations.[90]

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[88] WIA, AWI, Conclusion, p. 2. On Antal, see Feichtinger, pp. 359-362. On the social history of art with which he was associated, see Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 159-168.
[89] Perry Anderson, 'Components', p. 84.
[90] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 26 September 1946. On Schmarsow, see Hans Lindau, 'August Schmarsow', *Nord und Süd*, 31 (1907), 173-182.

This seems to have been a moment of frustration rather than an absolute and final judgment on Warburg, however, as in 1950 he was willing to employ what he called 'Warburgery' in a planned lecture,

> attack[ing] the concept of style and of the spirit of the age being visible in pictures [...] saying that though pictures are not documents per se they form nice random samples for the restoration of contexts of which one would otherwise have remained unaware.[91]

If the natural-science terminology of 'nice random samples' already suggests a Popperian quality rather at odds with the Warburg evoked by Bing or by researchers working after Gombrich, this quotation also demonstrates that Gombrich felt Warburg to have made some distinctive contribution to the discipline of art history.

Nonetheless, in the draft biography, there is a tension visible in the marginalia between this feeling on Gombrich's part and Bing's insistence on Warburg's originality. Gombrich offers quite painstaking detail on the debts and possible debts Warburg owed intellectually to peers and predecessors. Figures like the theorist of empathy Theodor Lipps receive attention here, but are totally absent in the *Intellectual Biography*, and others including Tito Vignoli (1828-1914) and Hermann Siebeck (1842-1920) receive much fuller accounts than would be offered in 1970.[92]

However, where Gombrich writes of Franz Wickhoff (1853-1909) and Schlosser as being amongst those with whose 'method – though not always with [whose] result – [...] Warburg found himself most in sympathy' as a student,[93] Bing disputes their

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[91] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 5 June 1950.
[92] On Vignoli, see Nicola Badaloni, 'Tito Vignoli tra evoluzionismo e neovichismo ottocentesco', *Studi Storici*, 31 (1990), 527-546. On Siebeck, see 'Siebeck, Hermann' in *Philosophen-Lexikon: Handwörterbuch der Philosophie nach Personen*, ed. by Wener Ziegenfuss and Gertrud Jung, 2 vols, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter + Co, 1950), II, pp. 531-533.
[93] WIA, AWI, B1, B.2.

influence. When Gombrich discusses the theory of the 'Mneme', he describes it as a product of 'Warburg's ambition in his student days to apply to aesthetics and historical psychology the strict methods of the natural sciences'.[94] Bing appends: 'According to the Opinion "Philosophicus" ([Edgar] Wind [(1900-1971)] + Solmitz) there is more original thinking in there than this reference to Biology would imply.'[95]

In one unpaginated slip offering general comments on the 'Mneme' chapter, Bing returns to

> the main question: I should prefer it if Wbg's ideas were developed in their own right, as they existed in his mind, without reference to "sources". The elements can no doubt be traced to various other writers. But the whole is split up into a[n] agglomeration of "déja vues" (or rather "schon gehabts") while the *unity* which is Wbg's own, escapes through the meshes. Semon must, I admit, be mentioned (as also Vignoli, + Burckhardt, + Schmarsow, Lamprecht[,] etc[.] at other places) but I should prefer it if they all went into footnotes or appendices.[96]

On Gombrich's chapter discussing 'The Individual Between the Conflicting Forces of History', Bing's notes read as follows:

> I feel that you keep your eyes glued to certain aspects of Wbg (perhaps not even the most original ones) and omit a great deal. A point in question is the grisaille. Surely the fact that he used a purely formal element (like the color [*sic*]) for the interpretation of a psychological situation is the main theme? [...] The originality in the "questioning" of the works of art is a little lost here.
>
> Also, perhaps you stress the polemic, and therefore more ephemeral, aspects of these things. I believe that Wbg's importance lies not so much in his more up-to-date conception of the Renaissance than in the widening of his range of vision – e.g. in this paper the way how he turns the grisaille, the impresa, the choice of subjects, etc. into historical or psychological evidence. His terminology has, after all, forged the tools for this kind of "carriers" of the symbolism to become debatable – They did not exist before him.[97]

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[94] WIA, AWI, N, M.1.
[95] Ibid. On Wind, see *Edgar Wind: Kunsthistoriker und Philosoph*, ed. by Horst Bredekamp, Bernhard Buschendorf, Freia Hartung and John Michael Krois (Berlin: Akademie, 1998).
[96] WIA, AWI, N, unpaginated slip.
[97] WIA, AWI, I, unpaginated slip.

Gombrich seems to offer a preemptive, indirect, but rather pointed response to such an attitude when his own introductory chapter, explaining Warburg's use of anthropology, includes a comment as follows: 'We need only open Warburg's writings to see that he was not out to 'apply' the ready made findings of another discipline to his own field.'[98] This comment is swiftly qualified as emphatically not an attempt to impress the reader with Warburg's originality as a thinker but rather with 'the focus of his researches'.[99]

On the issue of scholarly influence, Bing is particularly critical of Gombrich's suggestion that Warburg's work was indebted, or even bears an affinity to, that of Jung – a statement which found its way, although in a qualified form acknowledging the limited empirical support, into the final *Intellectual Biography*.[100]

In the draft chapter on the 'Mneme', Gombrich writes that Warburg 'assimilated' Jung's approach to symbols for his 'Mnemosyne' project:

> The scientific scaffolding for this vast undertaking Warburg had acquired during the time of his illness. It was there that he came into contact with the teachings of Jung and their emphasis on the life of the symbols in the collective memory of a civilisation.[101]

Bing's hand is at its most emphatic when she offers a capitalized 'NO' to Gombrich's claim that 'towards the end of [Warburg's] life the theories of the collective unconscious and of the social mneme as they were formulated by the school of Jung therefore appealed to him very greatly'.[102]

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[98] WIA, AWI, 1, A.9.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 242 and p. 287.
[101] WIA, AWI, L, L.20.
[102] WIA, AWI, 1, A.22.

Bing comments: 'Certainly the idea of "Mnemosyne" if not the word is older with Wbg than Jung's books, which anyhow he definitely did not know.'[103]

The discussion of Jung marks virtually the only direct mention of Warburg's mental illness in this draft text, and it does little in terms of connecting that illness to Warburg's intellectual work. Perhaps at this point the yoking together of the 'pathological' and 'scholarly' Warburg, a move which Bing seems to have investigated in the 1930s, was intended solely for her planned biographical companion to Gombrich's scholarly project. Indeed, a letter from Gombrich to Kris in 1946 reports the Warburg scholar having told Bing 'that I was against publishing the [*Mnemosyne*] Atlas in its existing form because of the presence of too many psychotic elements'.[104]

Where Warburg's emotional state does receive mention in the draft papers, the relationship between the personal and the scholarly is rendered universal, rather than being investigated in terms of Warburg's particular experiences and work. He writes:

> More and more did Warburg see in the Renaissance a gigantic parable of human existence. The clashing forces of the period, its protagonists and its representative works became to him charged with personal meaning, [but...i]n a very esoteric sense all Warburg's historical writings are fragments of an autobiography. To a larger or smaller degree this may hold good for all scholars. Whether we want it or not we express a piece of our self in even the most detached and factual observation we put on paper. The historian is doubly affected by the issues of the past. If he wants not merely to catalogue and to chronicle but to understand he cannot but see its issues in terms of his own inner experience. [105]

This passage reduces the impact of the connections between the personal and scholarly in Warburg's life and work by reducing them to the mere 'esoteric' manifestation of a generalisation that holds true, to 'a larger or smaller degree', for all

[103] Ibid.
[104] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 26 September 1946.
[105] WIA, AWI, 1, A.18-19.

historians. If all historians express autobiography through their scholarship, Gombrich implies, the relationship between life and work in Warburg's case is of no exceptional interest. Gombrich even uses generalisation to avoid exploration of Warburg's specific case when he explains:

> [W]arburg's personality cannot and should not be separated from his theories. The question he had posed was not merely a historical question. If we are all brothers under the skin to the head hunter and the leopard man, if you need only scratch a Greek to find a Barbarian of unspeakable cruelty and frenzy, where in this terrible world of ours do we find a fixed point on which to base our conception of human dignity? To find the answers which previous civilisations had given to this anxious question was to Warburg anything but an academic pursuit.[106]

The possible connections between Warburg's specific scholarly interests, his approach to history, his personal life and his mental health are refused. Gombrich universalizes the issue of connections between the personal and scholarly to pose only the broadest of questions about the human condition. Bing herself endorses, even if only by absence of comment, Gombrich's repeated affirmations of the wider value of Warburg's scholarship, such as that offered in the draft opening chapter:

> The positive results of his papers [...] have been added to the common stock of knowledge there to be retained, supplemented or amended by subsequent research. They are and must be considered independent of the personality of their originator.[107]

Indeed, it is Bing who dismisses as spurious and overly personal some of the materials Gombrich uses in his draft. A chapter which sees serious conflict between Gombrich and his editor discusses 'Approaches to Contemporary Art'. Material which is discussed only in a reduced, piecemeal fashion in the *Intellectual Biography* is treated substantially here, unified by the question of Warburg's attitude to art produced by his

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[106] WIA, AWI, 1, A.17.
[107] WIA, AWI, 1, A.3.c.

contemporaries. There is discussion of Hugo Lederer's (1871-1940) statue of Bismarck, of a play Warburg wrote for his fiancé in which a young impressionist painter faces the censure of his prospective father-in-law on artistic grounds, and also of a never-published response to criticism of his friend Heinrich Brockhaus' (1858-1941) opinions on painter Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901), communicated in a speech at a ceremony commemorating Böcklin's death in Florence. Warburg's draft response criticizes the 'prejudices of the middle class buyer [...] generally in favour of detailed anecdotic naturalism'.[108] Bing's comments at this draft stage are far from positive:

> I feel this part is not too successful. The play and Böcklin hardly deserve such serious treatment. I am afraid the play was written mostly to please the future Mrs. Wbg and Böcklin too is too personal an event and rather belongs to a chapter headed Wbg in Florence. In all the other cases [...] the essential elements are in the ethical rather than the artistic *field*. [...Y]our conclusions at the end of the chapter bear this out, I think; they are a little trivial[.][109]

Bing is also significantly critical of Gombrich's chapter entitled 'Nympha Florentina'. The 1970 version of this material, and the potential for a feminist response to Gombrich's account of this correspondence between Warburg and André Jolles as a kind of erotic conceit on the theme of the 'New Woman', have been discussed previously.[110] Bing anticipates such critical responses in her comments on Gombrich's draft, which is close to his final published version.

When Gombrich writes of the piece on the 'nymph' – 'In a way these fragments tell us more about Warburg's personal thoughts than many of his published writings with their severe discipline' – Bing responds, 'I do not agree.'[111] She resists in particular the sexualized approach which Gombrich has taken. On Gombrich's

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[108] WIA, AWI, E Nympha Florentina, J1.d.
[109] WIA, AWI, E Nympha Florentina, unpaginated slip.
[110] See 4.2 above.
[111] WIA, AWI, E Nympha Florentina, E. 3.

interpretation, relating Warburg's nymph to the nineteenth-century 'New Woman', Bing writes, with Saxl's evident support:

> I do not particularly like this bit either (the question mark on the preceding page is Saxl's). There may be something in what you say but there is a real difference between Jolles' approach and Warburg's; Wbg disapproved of both Jolles' sensuality and his aestheticism in good earnest.[112]

This is not just the loyalty of two of Warburg's close friends and colleagues unwilling to see him portrayed as a sexual fantasist. The feminist aspect of Bing's criticism manifests itself when her pen intercedes on the typescript to rework Gombrich's description of the nymph as an 'elusive heroine of beauty' into the 'elusive expression of human freedom', granting the nymph a degree of agency and an identity broader than that of mere feminized object of the male art historian's desire.[113]

By and large, however, it must be acknowledged that the drafts from 1947-8 show little trace of disagreement between Bing and Gombrich. Significant passages from the 1970 publication, including the controversial translation of 'Athen will eben immer wieder neu aus Alexandrien zurückerobert sein', pass without Bing's criticism or comment.

It is this translation which Michael P. Steinberg would find so telling in his commentary on Warburg's 'Kreuzlingen lecture'.[114] On the broader question of rendering Warburg's own voice in English, Gombrich had elsewhere made an admission to Kris: 'This is one of the points where I foresee a bit of a tussle with Dr.

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[112] WIA, AWI, E Nympha Florentina, E. 4a.
[113] WIA, AWI, E Nympha Florentina, E. 27.
[114] See 4.3.4 above.

Bing, but she too knows that W. can't be adequately translated'.[115] Gombrich was not only thinking of his editor, however, but also of an Anglophone readership:

> Of course Warburg's style presents tremendous difficulties, in fact I'll have to resort to paraphrase rather than to translation because this oracular, super-charged tense and compact style completely looses [*sic*] its point when transposed into English. It would only strike people as 'teutonic' (which of course it is).[116]

This latter point about translation suggests tensions between the agendas of the scholars working on the biographical project and the need for the now London-based Warburg Institute to consider potential audiences for the reception of its founder's thought. For both Gombrich and the wider Warburg Institute, the issue of integration into British academia and society was a pressing one throughout the Second World War and beyond. The negotiations made to protect the Institute relate as much to the biography of the Institute's founder as to institutional issues, and they manifest themselves quite clearly in the archival record. It to this record we now turn in order to understand how accommodation to British culture and society shaped postwar work on the Warburg biography.

5.3.1 Making a Warburg fit for Britain

In the immediate postwar period, with the conflict that had brought the Warburg Institute to London at an end, staff were looking to ensure the ongoing security of their position in British society. Looking to the archival record, we find that this concern

[115] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 March 1946.
[116] Ibid.

manifested itself in such a way to influence even the details of the Warburg biographical project.

In April 1947, for example, Gombrich reported to Kris that he and Saxl

> had discussed the plan to write a really historical account of Warburg before, I once suggested to him that this mightn't be of great interest to English readers, whereupon he said 'das ist mir ganz wurst, ich schreib das Buch nicht für England.'[117]

Saxl's sharp retrort seems to have been something less than an unbending principle, however, as evidenced by his comments on early drafts of Gombrich's work. Gombrich reported them to Kris:

> [Saxl] liked it on the whole, but [felt that] there was too much "Warburg did this"[,] "Warburg thought that" in it, by which I showed that I wanted to dissociate myself from Warburg's view – (which is pretty obvious, but after all that's what I mean by a historical account) – he would rather I criticised more openly (which might demolish the whole picture before it is even built up) and he wondered what English readers would say to it all.[118]

Clearly, loyalty to Warburg's memory was to be negotiated against the needs of an English or Anglophone audience. Saxl's solution was to show Gombrich's manuscript to another party. Gombrich explained:

> An assistant keeper at the V. & A., a certain [H.D.] Molesworth [,] quite a nice chap [...] told Saxl that English readers could'nt [*sic*] stomach such stuff, they only like simple, plain statements, rather dogmatic, brief, and what one should do is to write quite a brief little book on what Warburg wanted. He (Mole[s]worth) is interested in a very diluted, primitive "Geistesgeschichte on the level, say, of [Karl] Schnaase." The English think that artists are funny people with long hair, they should learn to see the work of art in relation to its period.
>
> That is the aspect of Warburg he thinks ought to be brought out, the rest should be discarded or left for a later publication. Incredible though it may

[117] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 20 April 1947.
[118] Ibid.

> sound Saxl was immediately all for this new idea, the chap Molesworth should turn my Manuscript into such a book.[119]

This tale, if true, certainly supports Gombrich's allegation that Saxl was not overly interested in the progress of intellectual life at the Warburg, that he was more interested in offering a library service than engage in research or posit new, possibly critical, ideas and theses. The shift between 'ich schreib das Buch nicht für England' and acceptance of Molesworth's recommendations certainly suggests a degree of intellectual vacillation on Saxl's part, and a pragmatic drive to get some piece on Warburg published sooner rather than later. At the same time, Saxl's dim view of the English attitude to art and artists, and Molesworth's enthusiasm for the Warburg Institute to be the vehicle for introduction of an English *Geistesgeschichte,* chime with an argument that émigré art historians took steps to actively professionalise and develop their profession from its vestigial and amateurish British incarnation. The question of the émigré contribution to British art history, one element of the wider discussion of émigrés' influence on host countries, has been addressed in particular by Daniel Snowman and Anne Béchard-Léauté.

In one aside, Daniel Snowman's 2004 article 'The Hitler Émigrés' asks its readers to

> [c]onsider [...] the transformation of art history from a genteel, Sunday-afternoon pursuit seventy or eighty years ago, preoccupied with questions of aesthetics and connoisseurship, to the highly professionalized academic subject of today, as pioneered by Gombrich and his colleagues at the Warburg Institute.[120]

Béchard-Léauté's PhD thesis on 'The Contribution of Émigré Art Historians to the British Art World After 1933' is an important contribution to the intellectual history

[119] Ibid.
[120] Snowman, 'The Hitler Émigrés', p. 455.

of art history in emigration, and provides some of the substance lacking in Snowman's brief but provocative claim – indeed, Béchard-Léauté argues that a generally acknowledged debt owed by British art history to German scholarship has been little qualified or interrogated.[121] Ultimately, her account claims that it was the high public profile of figures like Gombrich and Nikolaus Pevsner which popularized art historical methods and thereby professionalized art history, rather than any particular intellectual advance which émigré art historians made.

In the present thesis, however, we are above all examining how Warburg's representation might have been shaped by the demands of transplanting art history from the German-speaking world. We have seen how the Gombrich of 1970 and beyond would tame the legacy of Warburg by conjuring the Hamburg art historian in the image of the secular, mature and rational humanist – vulnerable, perhaps, to the emotional qualities of the past but only as a consequence of great sensibility. Warburg's posthumous representation in Gombrich's hands thus perpetuated a stable and inoffensive cosmopolitan humanism, derived from *Bildungskultur* and almost wholly consistent with Perry Anderson's thesis that émigrés shored up traditional British intellectual values against radicalism.

The Gombrich of 1947, however, made an allegation against Saxl of 'astonishing moral cowardice': 'he is always dependent on the approval of someone or other'.[122] Building on a sardonic remark to Kris in 1945 – 'However mad Warburg was he *did* have ideas, plenty of them, and in this [...] rather contrasts with the present complement of his ship'[123] – in 1948, Gombrich cuttingly wrote:

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[121] Anne Béchard-Léauté, 'The Contribution of Émigré Art Historians to the British Art World After 1933' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Cambridge University, 1999), p. 9.
[122] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 20 April 1947.
[123] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 22 December 1945.

> To put it briefly Saxl tries for all he is worth to steer the Institute away from any conceivable idea or thought which Warburg or anyone else may ever have had. For this reason he also looks upon me with quite an unconce[a]led suspicion which is only mitigated by a certain personal feeling of confidence and the common background [...] The same antagonism is always lingering in our slightly unpleasant discussions on the book on Warburg[.][124]

With regard to the possibility of an English writer helping to rework the Warburg material, Gombrich commented that 'I would be prepared to help [in] writing a joint book with the 'official view' on Warburg published by the [I]nstitute but not as a book of mine'.[125] Gombrich's desire to maintain control over work produced in his own name anticipates his close attention to translations of his 1970 biography.[126] In response to Molesworth's offer to work on the manuscript, Gombrich reports that

> When I said I did[n']t feel like that at all, it was[n']t what we had agreed on etc. [Saxl's] reactions were none too pleasant. He kept reminding me how much he worried about me, how important it was for *me* that this book should be a success in England, because after all it was his plan to go before his board with this book and ask for me to be employed on a permanent basis, how deeply he felt his responsibility for me and so on.[127]

Here, present-day readers aware of the context of this letter can perhaps see Saxl's side of the situation against which Gombrich railed. The Director was under pressure to both protect the Institute in its host country and manage his troublesome, ambitious junior scholar. Research in the present thesis has shown that the Institute's situation in London remained complicated and was scarcely more secure than Gombrich's own position as former 'enemy alien'. Indeed, Gombrich's choice of a scholarly career over one in intelligence had made him rather dependent on the

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[124] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 27 February 1948.
[125] Ibid. Note that Gombrich was willing to have Charles Mitchell, the Warburg Institute's 'parade Englaender' (see 3.3.2 above), review his manuscript, but this seems to have been purely in his role as a fellow member of Warburg staff. See EHG, Gertrude Bing, Bing to Gombrich, 9th October 1947.
[126] See 4.2 above.
[127] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 20 April 1947.

Institute's fortunes.[128] Gombrich's own scholarly ambitions seem to have left him frustrated and chafing at the restrictions created by this precarious situation. A little over a year before the meeting at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Gombrich had written to Kris:

> The Institute's position at present is most queer. It has a niche, a budget and a standing but no function. The University took it over but is a bit bewildered about it all. London University is very much a degree conferring body and a research Institute of this kind really does not quite fit into any of its parts. Saxl's personal prestige stands high with many, because, as you know, he always relishes answering queries and bringing people and books together but I very much doubt whether anybody has an idea what use to make of the Institute. It has to tread rather wearily [*sic*] because, for instance, the Courtauld Institute shows signs of uneasiness and jealousy if we deal too openly in History of Art rather than in "the classical tradition in the History of Art" and they oppose Saxl's tendencies to tak[e] a hand in visual education (into which he would very much like to push me).[129]

Two years later, Gombrich referred to the 'intellectual white Elephant called [the] Warburg Institute' and a

> Warburg miasma [...] There is just no-one there with whom I can discuss such ideas or, for that matter, any ideas at all. They have sold themselves to London University as an Institute for the study of the classical tradition (a thing which never so much as entered Warburg's head) and anything that contains a few Latin quotations 'belongs' to us.[130]

Here again, it is Gombrich who seems to anticipate Perry Anderson's critique, finding the moves made to promote the Warburg Institute within Britain too costly in terms of the intellectual compromises and barriers to scholarly innovation which they have created. As with the mention of Antal by Bing and the allegation of 'moral cowardice' on Saxl's part, individual comments in the archival record challenge Perry Anderson's monolithic vision of a conservative émigré culture ruled by a principle of

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[128] See 3.3 above.
[129] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 March 1946.
[130] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 24 April 1948.

psychologism and the denial of historical change. Gombrich figures here as a scholar ambitious to develop new approaches in art history and aesthetics, clashing with senior staff apparently more interested in integrating their institution as a component of British national culture than fostering intellectual development.

Gombrich's response to Saxl's comments – 'how much he worried about me, how important it was for me that this book should be a success in England'[131] – was to state:

> [S]urely I did not write the book on Warburg to further my career – if I wanted to do that I would know of more useful things to write – but [...] I wrote it to meet an old obligation. As to his plan to write the small book [i.e., Molesworth's proposal] first I had to tell him [i.e., Saxl] that I could[n']t after all go on writing on Warburg for the rest of my days and that I wanted to get down to more general problems of image and symbol etc. To this he said 'of course, of course' but he heard it with some dismay.[132]

Although other letters show Gombrich knew the poor career prospects outside the Institute for one who 'can claim to be a real expert only on two things – Warburg's writings and the German Home Service 1939-45'[133], the younger scholar went on to offer Saxl an ultimatum of sorts, telling

> Saxl that what I wanted to know from him was, whether my representation of Warburg's ideas was correct and fair (which he admitted) and if so, whether he thought that a book about Warburg as he really was would do the Institute harm in England, in which case I suggested printing the thing privately. Of this he would[n']t hear.[134]

Again the stakes are high, and Gombrich shows himself to be fearful of the possibility that Warburg could be represented so as to damage both his own and the

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[131] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 20 April 1947.
[132] Ibid.
[133] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 24 April 1948.
[134] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 20 April 1947.

Institute's prospects in its host country. Gombrich addresses the issue in starkly pragmatic and office-political terms in a letter to Kris which proposes

> two ways of action: a.) I could wait cynically till he retires in four years, keep more or less quiet and on good terms with him and exert some moral pressure that he does give me a permanent post before he leaves (which he would). Or I can tell him openly that in my view the Institute is not a charitable institution, that he need not feel 'responsible' for me but should tell me, whether he consider[s] me an asset or a liability to the Institute, and that, if the latter, I would use the two remaining years of my grant to establish a position for myself outside which would make it easier for me to find something when the grant expires.[135]

On clashes with Saxl over Warburg's representation, Gombrich developed the attitude that

> the unspoken conflict behind this tussle can never be resolved. Saxl wants to 'normalise' Warburg and to publish a book in which, for the umptiest time, the story of the Palazzo Schifanoja and similar 'discoveries' of Warburg are re-told ad usum delphini. I want a book which should bring out the problematic and even pathological elements in Warburg but should, at the same time, represent him as a daring experiment[e]r in ideas such as he really was. Such a book can never be very 'easy' or "English", but it may still be worth writing both as a contribution to the history of ideas and as the picture of an interesting man. But here I am up against a deep-seated resist[a]nce in Saxl. He had always tried to popularise the subjects of Warburg's researches rather than the ideas which these subjects were meant to illustrate, and he knows perfectly well that a good many people have regretted and resented this development. The very approach which I choose for my book on Warburg (with such questions as the nature of the symbol in the center and much emphasis on the evolutionist, Darwinistic, 'monistic' ethnological interests of Warburg in his youth) is in itself a renewal of these rankling accusations. The fact that I don't believe many of Warburg's so[-]called historical discoveries (Botticelli etc.) has[n']t improved matters because Saxl must present him as a historian and iconographer to justify his (Saxl's) later policy.[136]

This telling passage again highlights the differing agendas among those of the Warburg staff working on the founder's posthumous representation. Saxl, depicted here as popularizer, must also be understood as a figure who needed to lend the name of his

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[135] Ibid.
[136] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 27 February 1948.

Institute some intellectual weight and currency with the host country's audience. Gombrich, later to be accused precisely of occluding the problematic and even pathological elements in Warburg, here seeks, from his junior role with less responsibility for 'the Institute in England', to open a critical engagement with Warburg as theorist. This passage again indicates the complexities which underly Perry Anderson's polarising account of the Central European intellectual migration, indicating as it does a clear distinction between Gombrich's ambitions for a new cultural and art history and the drive for preservation of the Warburg heritage on Saxl's part. Any alleged 'Central European conservatism' fragments into conflicting individual positions which put Anderson's thesis beyond testing. Gombrich's historical approach, influenced by Popper and Hayek, might have been 'conservative' by Anderson's New Left standards, yet in comparison with the Saxl of 1948, it could seem a radical departure into new territories of cultural history.

When Henri Frankfort (1897-1954) was appointed director of the Institute in early 1949, Gombrich found greater support for his ambitions, especially to work on topics other than Warburg's *Nachlass*. Bing also wrote to him in a letter following Saxl's death which seems to speak of a need to hold familiar figures close at a time of great personal loss. Happy 'dass Sie zu denen gehören denen das Institut lieben', she writes: 'Ich kann Ihnen ebensowenig danken als meine recht Hand meiner linken danken weil Sie und ich und das Institut ja doch wirklich eines sind.' She is particularly impressed with Gombrich's loyalty, as 'in Ihre Lage wäre es leicht gewesen sich darüber zu täuschen[.]'[137]

[137] EHG, Gertrude Bing, Bing to Gombrich, 20 December 1948.

Although this seems to represent a move to incorporate Gombrich fully into the Warburg scholarly 'family' from which he had distanced himself, he continued to clash with the older generation of Warburg staff. Bing in particular would be the focus of Gombrich's complaint at the Institute's 'unbusinesslike and purely personal [atmosphere...] Today I have been commanded by Bing to attend the funeral of old Miss Yates['] over 90 year[...] old mother though I protested that I was really busy'.[138] The camaraderie and interweaving of the personal and professional which seems to have characterised Hamburg's pre-emigration KBW was being challenged by a Gombrich whose affiliations, although deeply coloured by gratitude for help in emigration, were purely professional – as is suggested by his willingness to step away from the issue of Warburg's legacy towards more contemporary and theoretical issues in art history. The change of director helped Gombrich in making this move. After discussing a project on image and language with Frankfort, a letter to Kris reported that:

> The upshot of it all was that F. considers this type of work the most important the Institute has to do and that he wants me definitely to embark on it as a book even if it takes five years etc. He knows that Saxl was afraid of this kind of problem but he feels that the Institute is in danger of loosing [*sic*] its center and that that ought to be its center. So far so good.
>
> Less good for timid souls such as I am is that somehow the tug of war is on with Bing defending the Saxl heritage as much as she can and trying to keep me and others from doing serious work by all kinds of little stratagems, needless to say quite unconsciously and somehow pathetically, she is really a poor devil and so on.[139]

By the time of Bing's tenure as Director in the mid-1950s, Gombrich would admit that she was 'not bad [...] insofar as she sees that new questions ought to be asked, but she cannot, of course, ask them'.[140] That Bing could be 'defending the Saxl heritage', described by Gombrich as a popularising, simplified version of Warburg, indicates the complexities of personal and institutional loyalty at play around the

[138] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 23 October 1951.
[139] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 22 April 1950.
[140] LOC, EKP, 6, Gombrich to Kris, 3 November 1956.

Warburg biographical project. Far from uncomplicatedly 'defending the heritage', either of Saxl or Warburg, other archived materials indicate that Bing was at this time laying the groundwork for a truly radical re-imagining of Warburg's achievements, to which we turn in the next section of this chapter.

5.4 Bing's return to the Warburg biography

With the death of Saxl, and Gombrich engaged on the other work he was so eager to begin, Bing seems to have felt herself solely responsible for producing a biography of her Institute's founder. Where Gombrich sought to question the depiction of Warburg in ways which suited the trend for 'critical rationalism' on the Popperian model, Bing in the postwar years, for all Gombrich accused her of 'defending the Saxl heritage', had returned to the business of probing the pathological and marginal aspects of Warburg's thought. To support this research, she renewed contact with Ludwig Binswanger. A letter of 10 July 1951 demonstrates her understanding of the importance of Warburg's stay in Kreuzlingen for any meaningful encounter with his life and work:

> Diese Aufgabe [the biography] wird jetzt mir zufallen. Im Gegensatz zu Professor Saxl der, wie Sie sich erinnern werden,Warburg verschiedentlich in Kreuzlingen besucht hat, bin ich nie dort gewesen, trotzdem ich schon vor Warburgs Rückkehr in der Bibliothek angestellt war. Ich empfinde diese Unkenntnis Ihrer Heilanstalt als eine grosse Lücke in meiner Vorstellung von Warburgs Leben und würde Ihnen sehr dankbar sein, wenn Sie mir erlauben würden Sie aufzusuchen.[141]

When Bing visited Binswanger on the Bodensee later that year, the letter she sent immediately prior to her visit again emphasises the importance of the doctor's

[141] UT, LBA, Aby Warburg Correspondence, Box 443/31, Bing to Binswanger, 10th July 1951.

personal recollections to her research: 'Natürlich sind mir Ihre Erinnerungen viel wichtiger als das blosse Betrachten der Umgebung in der Warburg so lange gelebt hat.'[142]

In the renewed postwar atmosphere of friendly personal and scholarly cooperation with Binswanger, fostered from Kreuzlingen as much as London, the aspiring biographer collected copies of Warburg's letters from Binswanger's files but also acknowledged other, non-documentary sources of data for her research – conversations and ambiances:

> Ich bin Ihnen sehr dankbar, dass Sie mir in so liberaler Weise Einsicht in die Akten gestattet haben, denn je mehr sich die Kreuzlingen Eindrücke in meiner Erinnerung verdichten, desto klarer wird es mir, welche Bereicherung mein Bild von Warburg dadurch erfahren hat. Das liegt natürlich nicht nur an den Akten, sondern auch an der Bekanntschaft mit dem ganzen *ambiente* von Bellevue und vor allem an den Gesprächen, die ich mit Ihnen haben führen dürfen.[143]

Evidence from the correspondence suggests that Bing's project might have been more than the purely personal account which Gombrich had described, implicitly contrasting it with his own *Intellectual Biography* when he wrote that 'any presentation of Warburg's ideas would be incomplete without a picture of his personality, without a biography. It was clear from the outset that only one person was fitted to write this biography – Gertrud Bing'.[144]

Bing anticipates the links later to be postulated by Charlotte Schoell-Glass and Michael P. Steinberg, links between the 'healthy' and 'sick' Warburg, between emotional strife and intellectual production:

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[142] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/55, Bing to Binswanger, 17 July 1951. The archive items relevant to the visit are UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/55, Bing to Binswanger, 17 July 1951, 20 September 1951, 26 October 1951.
[143] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/55, Bing to Binswanger, 26 October 1951.
[144] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p. 4.

> Ihre Beschreibung von Warburg und Ihr Verständnis für die Dinge, die mich über das klinische Bild hinaus an Warburgs Krankheit interessieren, haben mir die Aufzeichnungen von 1921-24 erst lebendig gemacht. Und aus beiden habe ich ein Bild des kranken Warburg erhalten das ich sehr wohl, sowohl in menschlicher wie in wissenschaftlicher Hinsicht, mit dem des gesunden Warburg verbinden kann. Dass eine solche Kontinuität besteht, wird Ihnen als "Seelenarzt", wie Warburg selbst gesagt hätte, eine selbstverständliche Einsicht sein. Mir war es weder so selbstverständlich, noch hätte es ohne meinen Besuch in Kreuzligen ja so eindrucksvoll werden können.[145]

Bing writes confidently of the possibility of transferring this new sensibility to paper, perhaps not only for the promotion and exposition of Warburg's thought but also for the development of Binswanger's own psychiatry:

> Ich glaube, dass ich mit einigem ruhigen Nachdenken, zu dem ich bisher noch nicht gekommen bin, und einem erneuten Lesen in Warburgs Schriften und Aufzeichnungen einiges von diesen Zusammenhängen zu Papier bringen kann. Jedenfalls will ich es versuchen. Ich habe auch nicht vergessen, dass ich versprochen habe Ihnen etwas aufzuschreiben über die Züge, die ich auch nach Warburgs Rückkehr nach Hamburg noch als Reste seiner Krankheit empfunden habe.[146]

In 1961, Bing, freed from her Warburg Institute duties in London, returned to Binswanger's clinic more determined than ever to incorporate its material on Aby Warburg into an account of the scholar's intellectual work.

In a letter written at the end of her visit, summing up its achievements, Bing explains:

> I saw for the first time the whole correspondence between Binswanger, the family and Warburg's doctor in Hamburg. That I did so now and not ten years ago is not due to ill-will – on the contrary, Binswanger is very helpful and incidentally remembers Warburg for various reasons better than he can possibly do the thousands of cases which he must have seen during 60 years of practice – but to a re-arrangement of files through which the medical records and the

[145] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/55, Bing to Binswanger, 26 October 1951.
[146] Ibid.

> correspondence have come together. Apart from my learning some biographical details[,] Binswanger's summings-up and judgments for the benefits of the family have given me a much clearer picture of the course of the illness than the day-to-day report[s] of the *Journale*. I think I [...] have [...] been able to discover some clues as to the form of his 'Wahnideen'. Obviously there is a question of the formation of symbols here. I am not thinking of the connection between Warburg's work and his experiences, which are clear for anybody to see (apart from the fact that most of his writing *precedes* the psychotic symbols) but rather of the way in which the symbols are produced – or reproduced – under pressure of illness. That some indications of this can be confirmed by reference to his work goes without saying.[147]

A letter to Binswanger preceding the visit gives even more detail about the nature of Bing's approach to Warburg, speaking not only of symbols but also of a linguistic focus:

> Ich bin vor 1 ½ Jahren als Direktor des Instituts in den sogenannten Ruhestand getreten und habe seitdem mehr Zeit gehabt mich an die Biographie von Warburg zu machen, die ich seit langem plane. Augenblicklich schreibe ich einen Aufsatz über seine wissenschaftliche Sprache, den, hoffe ich, seine Stellung als Denker ins rechte Licht setzen wird. Dies alles hat mir natürlich neue Ideen gegeben und ich habe das Gefühl dass ich auch die Periode seiner Krankheit mit frischen Augen sehen würde.[148]

This letter, with its mention of a specific essay applying material from the period of Warburg's illness to an understanding of his academic language, suggests that Bing's biographical work was as intellectually robust as Gombrich's 'definitive' *Intellectual Biography*. Material from the hospital files would not just be alluded to, but directly cited – 'An Erich Warburg schreibe ich heute, um ihn zu bitten, Ihnen seine Einwilligung zur eventuellen Nutzbarmachung Ihrer Briefe für Warburg's [*sic*] Biographie mitzuteilen' – in a way that incontrovertibly linked pathology and intellectual history – 'Ich glaube, ich habe Beziehungen zwischen den Form von Warburgs Wahnideen und seiner Arbeit gesehen, die m[ir] frühe[r] entgangen sind.'[149]

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[147] EHG, Gertrude Bing, Bing to Gombrich, 30 August 1961.
[148] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/31, Bing to Binswanger, 21 May 1961.
[149] UT, LBA, GC, Box 443/68, Bing to Binswanger, 1 September 1961.

Bing was eager to share the fruits of her research and her analysis with Gombrich. She had already solicited and received feedback regarding her fresh understanding of Warburg and his work. Her comment that 'it would be a great help to me if you gave me the first shot of your most devastating criticism' would provoke a response sufficient to require both a letter and a densely written postcard in reply.[150]

The letter, particularly, which Bing would send to Gombrich clarifying elements of the draft he scrutinised, highlights the difference between their approaches and the extent to which Gombrich's own scholarly approach was perceived by Bing to now be inflecting his understanding of Aby Warburg. Discussion focusses on Warburg's *Pathosformel* or 'pathos formula', his theorisation of the means by which emotional forces encoded themselves within images:

> The crucial point about the Pathosformel which I want to make is simply not there. You are right in saying that it may have been a false step from the point of view which you are taking in your Congress lecture. It is not so in the light of what Wbg makes of it. The fact is, in my opinion, that he goes off the artist's job altogether with it. There is not a word in any of his later writings concerning other formulae, taken from Raphael or Michelangelo maybe. He does not care about them nor would he have had any objections if they had been pointed out to him. What I meant to say with my limping sentence that he looked at the Pathosformel in the same way as the copyists of ancient marbles in the Quattrocento is this: he concentrates more and more on the smallest units of the "language" of images, on the words, as it were, instead of on the sentences. The Pathosformel is the single posture or gesture as it is formed on the marble[.][151]

Here, Bing accuses Gombrich of judging Warburg in the terms of Gombrich's own increasingly technicalised approach to the history of styles. The 'Congress lecture' of which she writes seems to be one of the Mellon lectures delivered in Washington which went on to form the basis for *Art and Illusion*, Gombrich's psychological and natural-science based approach to the issue of *mimesis*.

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[150] EHG, Gertrude Bing, Bing to Gombrich, 5 August 1961.
[151] EHG, Gertrude Bing, Bing to Gombrich, 15 August 1961.

Bing's own understanding of Warburg, one focussing on a linguistic metaphor for the basis of meaning in visual imagery, begins to emerge in these discussions. Her own elucidation of the 'Pathos formula' runs as follows:

> The formula – that is to say, a sharply defined image – corresponds exactly to what we call "Ausdruck" [expression] in the linguistic sense, just as the words triumph, terror, awe or whatever it may be are the expressions for the mental situations which they denote. That, I think, is the value which the Pathosformel has for him; and that it is also part of the idealising or, as you very aptly (and newly) call it, 'maximalising' style is only incidental. The Pathosformel is one of the well-chosen expressions [...] making for an exalted diction but it does not by itself constitute the style.[152]

Bing again pointedly refers to the difference between Gombrich's approach and Warburg's:

> Even if I had succeeded in making all this clear in my last two pages, you would not have found in them very much help for the question as you pose it. You are concerned with the syntax of the language of style – and if it were not pressing the simile too hard, I would say Wbg is really concerned about its grammar, or rather the formation and application of words. It seems he was getting less and less interested in the individual artist's way of expressing himself, except in so far as his choice of words reflects on their meaning.[153]

Bing herself would continue to maintain a distinction between her biographical work and Gombrich's intended companion piece. She writes at one point of Warburg's failure to address Donatello or Leonardo:

> There is not much point in mentioning them because nobody knows them – they belong to the BIOGRAPHY (if ever). I don't want to go in to the rightness or wrongness of Wbg[']s conceptions at all – so I am grateful for your warning against committing myself to historical statements.[154]

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[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.

Nonetheless, Bing was willing to put her ideas to critical test in the context of a university seminar, writing to Gombrich:

> If you like, I believe I might explain something of this for your seminar next winter – provided I still consider it as significant as I do now and provided I still have the courage to ventilate my surmises before a critical audience.[155]

Bing certainly never managed to publish her substantial work on Warburg's life, although a letter to Gombrich from 1962 records attempts to negotiate between potential publishers of a German edition.[156] The seminar paper of which she speaks appears to have become a Courtauld Institute lecture of 1962, which in its article form remains the most significant piece of writing that she published on Warburg. It is this to which we turn in the next section, aware that when Bing's biographical materials were destroyed, as reported by Gombrich, this was the loss of more than a 'personal view' of Warburg. Bing's work on Warburg was not a 'mere' biography in this pejorative sense, but a substantial and rigorously thought-out contribution to intellectual history. We examine Bing's account of Warburg alongside powerful material from the archive which reveals the extent to which Gombrich's own concerns had sealed his approach to Warburg over the decades. In conclusion, we consider both scholars' work in relation to the Warburg *lieu de mémoire*.

[155] EHG, Gertrude Bing, Bing to Gombrich, 30 August 1961.
[156] EHG, Gertrude Bing, Bing to Gombrich, 26 August 1962.

5.4.1 The potential of Gertrud Bing's research on Warburg

The 1962 lecture by Bing appeared as an article in the 1965 *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*.[157] Bing's approach to Warburg in the article is less radical than her correspondence at times seems to promise, but still significant in its differences from Gombrich's.

The initial pages speak of the ongoing postwar need to articulate precisely what Warburg's work consisted of to a wider academic audience: Warburg is a figure whose 'posthumous fame comes more from hearsay than from a knowledge of his writings, [...] one of those authors whose fortune it is [...] to be more often praised than read', a figure 'obscured by the size of the legacy that he bequeathed to his heirs to be used and augmented'.[158] Confronting this problem, Bing enjoins 'those who are not satisfied with judging his stature by the influence he has exerted [...to], as he himself always advised, go back to the sources'.[159] Such comments are perhaps not so different from Gombrich's own focus on the *Nachlass* material in the *Intellectual Biography*, but Bing also traces most delicately the ambivalences and open-ended spaces of Warburg's thought. Comparing Warburg's work on the discreet placement of Florentine patrons within the works of art they commissioned and the use of *grisaille* to render remote scenes of ancient Roman life on Renaissance tombs with his work on the afterlife of 'primitive' astrology in the early modern period, she writes that in the earlier Italian studies,

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[157] Gertrud Bing, 'A.M. Warburg', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965), 299-313.
[158] Ibid., pp. 299-300.
[159] Ibid., p. 300.

> Warburg leaves us in no doubt that his sympathies were in every case on the side of the distanced view. In the ambiguity of the astrological images he now discovers that there are two ways open to man of dealing with the natural world, by abstraction or by union. The decision between them can never be final.[160]

Here again Bing's work seems to anticipate Steinberg's in particular, even if 'Athen will eben immer wieder neu aus Alexandrien zurückerobert sein' becomes 'Athens must ever again be rescued from Alexandria',[161] and Warburg's stay in Kreuzlingen receives only the briefest comment.[162] Bing is above all emphasising the provocative, irreducibly idiosyncratic nature of Warburg's thought. She writes:

> All over his writings there are traces of wreckage: projects not carried out, promises of articles never written, and ideas which were never developed [...] The spread of scholarly curiosity is so wide as to obscure the red thread of a leading interest.[163]

She suggests his work is best understood as

> a mine, a central shaft sunk by Warburg from which galleries branch off at various levels right and left, each exploiting a different vein of the same substance. We have to turn to the original shaft to discover the spots which have proved so profitable for tapping.[164]

Bing even emphasises her understanding 'that Warburg's work is so consequential because it was left as a fragment, with the fragment's power of testifying to a larger edifice and of challenging the imagination to supplement its details', a conclusion which perhaps runs counter to those of many recent studies of Warburg which, in reconstructing that edifice with reference to Benjamin, Kraus or other figures have threatened the 'fragment's power'.[165]

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[160] Ibid., p. 313.
[161] Ibid., p. 313.
[162] See ibid., p. 300 and p. 304.
[163] Ibid., p. 302.
[164] Ibid., p. 304.
[165] Ibid., p. 302.

The image of a central mine shaft branching into galleries powerfully conjures both Warburg's legacy and a way of figuring that legacy which does not totally co-opt or mould it to a fixed contemporary agenda. At the same time, we have a hint of how Bing's Warburg might have appeared when, building on her comment to Binswanger that she wanted to write on Warburg's 'wissenschaftliche Sprache', she lays emphasis on Warburg's 'exceptionally condensed language which one feels is created for the purpose and which enables him to make his general point of view show through his formulation without divorcing it from the particular', and his questioning of

> the coining of images as a process of civilization and the changing relations between the images of art and of language. All the other elements in his enquiries which are now thought to be characteristic, his interest in iconography, his focus on the *Nachleben der Antike*, are much more means to an end than ends in themselves.[166]

The substance of this article builds on the account of Warburg given in Bing's letters sent to Gombrich in 1961. Taken together, the published and private texts point the way to a representation of Warburg on which we can only speculate, a Warburg which Bing might have conjured with the authority and substance of Gombrich's own *Intellectual Biography*. It would be an act of excessive speculation to imagine exactly how such a work might have affected later critical responses to Warburg. However, we can contrast the potential of 'Bing's Warburg' with the actuality of Gombrich's work on Warburg. We do so in the next section, turning now for the last time to the Gombrich of wartime and the Gombrich of 1996 to underline the continuities of emotional concern, forged under ethnonationalist threat, as they affected his work on Warburg.

[166] Ibid., p. 302.

5.5 Memory and identity, 1940/1996: The limits of Gombrich's approach

Careful reading of the copious archived and published writing of Ernst Gombrich allows us, in the light of all that has gone before in this thesis, to juxtapose Gombrich's words in 1940 and 1996. When Gombrich, writing to Bing during the Second World War, criticised the concept of inherited memory in both Freud and Warburg's work, he used phrases nearly identical to those with which he would later vehemently dismiss the existence of a Jewish cultural identity. There is a significant resonance here between Gombrich's criticism of Warburg's theory of memory and his disavowal of Jewish identity. It presents the researcher with a nexus of issues which links Freud to Warburg, Gombrich's broadest notions of scholarship and identity to specific discussions held among the members of the Warburg Institute, and Gombrich's seminar outburst of 1996 to a moment in his first years negotiating life as an émigré scholar, 'enemy alien', and person of Jewish background.

The work which draws these themes together is Freud's *Moses and Monotheism,* a book on which Gombrich apparently never made public comment, but which is mentioned in the Warburg Institute's archived General Correspondence. This 1934 text pushed the boundaries of psychoanalytic inquiry in Freud's time, with its thesis that the Jewish people were a tribe converted to monotheistic religion by Moses, an Egyptian heretic whom they then murdered, and who, thanks to the biological heritability of collective memory, continues to haunt bearers of Jewish identity in the twentieth century.

The leading contemporary commentator on the work, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, cites an increasing tendency in late-twentieth-century scholarship to approach this book 'as a kind of historical fiction masking Freud's private family romance – his allegedly unresolved oedipal conflict with his father and, deriving from this, his assumed ambivalence over, and even repudiation of, his Jewish identity'.[167] Given this tendency, the relevance of this text for the issues that I am pursuing in Gombrich's life and work is obvious, in that it is a scholarly work which speaks of an ambivalent relationship with, 'and even repudiation of' a Jewish identity which haunts the *Gebildete* bearer.

In February 1940, while stationed in Evesham, Gombrich announced in a letter to Gertrud Bing that he had

> just read two products of modern Euhemerism, Woo[l]ley's Abraham and Freud's Moses. Personally I find them interesting as historical novels or so but rather futile from the sceptical historian[']s point of view. The points of contact between the Moses and some of Warburg[']s mnemic thoughts are however so surprising that I must urge you to read the book in spite of the obvious Wiederstaende which you are sure to feel. Don't give up before reading the last chapters because it is there that Freud reveals that he really believes that strong experiences of the past like the killing of the primaeval father survive as memory traces in the unconscious of the nation after a long "latency period" with all their power. I could not say that he has convinced me but the similarity with some of th[e] basi[c] conceptions of the Mnemosyne is really surprising.[168]

The term 'historical novel', seen previously in Gombrich's discussions of Freud's *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood*, recurs, and is applied to a work in which Gombrich perceives a basic 'similarity' with Warburg's principal work

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[167] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, 'Freud on the 'Historical Novel': From the manuscript draft (1934) of Moses and Monotheism', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 70 (1989), 375-395 (p. 375).

[168] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Ernst Gombrich to Gertrud Bing, 21 February 1940. Sir Leonard Woolley (1880-1960) was the British archaeologist responsible for the excavation of the Babylonian city of Ur. In the course of this project he came to believe that he had uncovered the historical dwelling of the Biblical figure Abraham: Gombrich is presumably referring to his book *Abraham: Recent Discoveries and Hebrew Origins* (London: Faber, 1936). Euhemerism is the belief that mythological gods were deified historical actors.

on social and cultural memory.[169] Freud himself had thought of *Moses and Monotheism* as a 'historical novel', and intended to subtitle the text as such, although the working title – and an extended introduction meditating on the issues of history and fiction – were ultimately dropped.[170] Gombrich may not have been aware of Freud's own designation of *Moses and Monotheism* as a 'historical novel', but the possibility cannot be ruled out. The intended subtitle to the work appears to have been first publicised by Ernest Jones in 1957,[171] but Yerushalmi mentions Gombrich's friend and collaborator Ernst Kris in conjunction with Freud's project.[172] The relevant letter from the correspondence of Freud and the writer Arnold Zweig (1887-1968) establishes a potential link to Gombrich when it discusses empirical research 'rousing' Freud's

> Moses in this way from the sleep which is his destiny [...] One of my young friends here, a Dr. Ernst Kris, a well-known art historian and official at the Museum, has also made certain investigations along channels accessible to him.[173]

In his 1940 letter to Gertrud Bing, Gombrich responds to Freud's project by retreating from historical interpretation to the most 'Popperian' reliance on natural science:

> I am afraid there is a strong biological argument against all these theories. To argue that the Florentines round 1460 remembered antiquity or the Jews round 800 Moses round 1300 BC in an actual sense implies that most of their ancestors were actually present and had had these experiences. I think this is open to grave doubts. We are always thinking in terms of the patriarchal pedigrees which are meaningless from the biological point of view. From this point of view a man or woman must have 2^{20} ancestors in the twenty first generation behind him, I leave it to you how much that is but it amounts certainly to many millions or more. I know that this figure is again reduced by cross-breeding but what

[169] See 2.2.4 above.
[170] See the full account of Yerushalmi, 'Freud on the 'Historical Novel''.
[171] Yerushalmi, 'Freud on the 'Historical Novel'', p. 375 fn. 3.
[172] Ibid., p. 384.
[173] Sigmund Freud to Arnold Zweig, 21 January 1936, in *The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Arnold Zweig*, ed. by Ernst L. Freud, trans. by Professor and Mrs. W.D. Robson-Scott (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1970), p. 119.

> remains is bewildering enough to kill every idea of a "collective" evolution of a nation or historical unit in a biological sense. I think that this point is important enough nowadays, when dilletantic [*sic*] biological ideas have done quite enough harm, to be stressed and considered.[174]

The biological objection to the notion of memory proposed in *Moses and Monotheism* is widely known and accepted. Yerushalmi writes:

> It is one thing even to imagine the formation of a phylogenetic heritage in the remotest prehistoric ages when, ostensibly, the structures of the human psyche were still in an early and fluid process of evolution, and certain overwhelming and universal experiences, repeated again and again over enormous periods of time, eventually left psychological imprints that could somehow be transmitted somatically to future generations. [...In Freud's *Moses*,] however, trauma in the form of a unique cluster of historical events, their encoding within the genetic legacy of a particular group, collective repression, and the "return of the repressed" all take place in relatively recent historical time within the brief span of some five to eight centuries.[175]

However, Gombrich's comments of 1940, and his choice to denigrate collective memory as a 'dilettantic' and implicitly racist idea, become much more significant when read alongside an excerpt from the much later and more public 1996 seminar paper:

> We all have two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and after ten generations we should have two to the power of ten, that is one thousand and twenty-four ancestors, unless there was intermarriage. In my case, the likelihood that all my ancestors shared all their genes with Abraham seems to be minimal - all the less as Judaism only recognises matrilinear descent.[176]

In this later comment, 1940's critical-rationalist challenge to the idea of heritable collective memory, which laudably undermines the patriarchal basis of the '"collective" evolution of a nation', has slipped close to the language of eugenics as it conflates Jewish cultural notions of descent with genetic inheritance. In 1996, Gombrich has

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[174] WIA, GC, Ernst Gombrich, Ernst Gombrich to Gertrud Bing, 21 February 1940.
[175] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 30-31.
[176] Gombrich, *Visual Arts in Vienna*, p. 20.

abandoned commentary on Freud or Warburg's notions of biological memory, and is criticising the very idea of a Jewish identity, albeit on anti-racist grounds. However, this criticism is based on the notion of a biological racial identity: Gombrich, eager to distance his own Jewish background from the 'shtetl Jew', is forcing a false dichotomy in which his reader either accepts the unrelatedness of 'shtetl' and 'assimilated' Jews, or else subscribes to theories of racial type.

The same difficulty underpins Gombrich's relationship to *Mnemosyne* and *Moses and Monotheism*. His own interpretations, of texts which arguably offer an ambivalent and sensitive exploration of heritable memories and identities, establish this false dichotomy, and thus create the literal, racially discriminating 'blood memory' which troubled him.

It is worth drawing attention to Freud's comment in the work on Moses that, although

> at the [present] time we have no stronger evidence for the presence of memory-traces in the archaic heritage than the residual phenomena of the work of analysis which call for a phylogenetic derivation, yet this evidence seems to us strong enough to postulate that such is the fact.[177]

Freud characterises the notion of a biologically inherited transgenerational memory as audacious, but also indispensable to progress 'either in analysis or group psychology'.[178] This use of a controversial thesis from another discipline is rather like Freud's appropriation of the anthropological theories of W. Robertson Smith (1846-

[177] Sigmund Freud, 'Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays' in *The Origins of Religion*, ed. by Albert Dickson, trans. by James Strachey and others, The Penguin Freud Library, 13 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), pp. 237-386 (p.346).
[178] Ibid., p.346.

1894) to explain the concept of the totem in both *Totem and Taboo* and the work on Moses. On that interdisciplinary move, Freud writes:

> I have repeatedly met with violent reproaches for not having altered my opinions in later editions of my book in spite of the fact that more recent ethnologists have unanimously rejected Robertson Smith's hypotheses and have in part brought forward other, totally divergent theories. [...] But I have not been convinced either of the correctness of these innovations or of Robertson Smith's errors. A denial is not a refutation, an innovation is not necessarily an advance. Above all, however, I am not an ethnologist but a psychoanalyst. I had a right to take out of ethnological literature what I might need for the work of analysis.[179]

The same argument can be made with regard to Warburg's notoriously densely expressed thoughts on memory. As Richard Woodfield argues, 'Warburg was a great dramatist who was capable of stating contradictory cases with complete conviction', and to read him as literally as Gombrich does may blind us to difficult issues in the endurance of memory, in particular a sense of being haunted by the past which could only be approached obliquely, using appropriated (but not necessarily appropriate) terminology from other thinkers and even other disciplines such as the natural sciences.[180] This is one of the points at which the potential value of 'Bing's Warburg' is clear. Her precise approach to Warburg's language and her appreciation of the linguistic qualities of Warburg's theory suggest a route into Warburgian scholarship which would not have stumbled over the reading of Warburg's notion of inherited memory as Gombrich arguably did. Bing's close attention to Warburg's language might have allowed a more sensitive reading of his concept of memory, one which did not assume it to be a biological and, as Gombrich ultimately decides, racist one.

When, as he chose to in 1940, Gombrich makes such literal and natural-scientific readings, his work can appear to support Michael P. Steinberg's critique of his

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[179] Ibid., p.380.
[180] Woodfield, 'Warburg's "Method"', p.272.

thought, which describes it in terms of 'Popperian positivism and [...] antipathy to psychoanalytic constructs'.[181] However, as we have seen, Gombrich did not entirely deny the importance of interpretation. He preferred a historian's humanist sensibility to the natural sciences' 'rein beschreibenden Neutralität' and insisted on a distinction between science and the humanities in *In Search of Cultural History*.[182] Nor was his relationship to psychoanalysis one of straightforward 'antipathy'. Rather, Gombrich sought to protect his cosmopolitan scholarly identity from Freud and Warburg's tentative explorations of group memory and ethnicity.

When Freud and Warburg, humanist scholars both, had approached the issue of identity and inheritance, they had done so with unconventional scholarship which was rendered unpalatable to Gombrich by the circumstances of persecution, exile and emigration in the mid-twentieth century. These circumstances had driven Gombrich to an emotionally charged devotion to an ethnicity-transcending cosmopolitan humanism. Gombrich uncompromisingly expressed grave doubts about Freud's and Warburg's work despite their own acknowledgement of its provisionality and tentative quality. Warburg had acknowledged the 'autobiographical reflex' on which Gombrich was so quick to leap, and Freud had remarked of the Leonardo essay of which Gombrich was so sceptical:

> If, in making these statements, I have provoked the criticism, even from friends of psychoanalysis and those who are expert at it, that I have merely written a psychological novel, I shall reply that I am far from over-estimating the certainty of these results.[183]

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[181] Steinberg, 'Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture', p. 68.
[182] See 2.2.3 above.
[183] Freud, cited in Yerushalmi, 'Freud on the 'Historical Novel'', p. 380. On the 'autobiographical reflex', see 4.2 above.

These caveats were insufficient to satisfy Gombrich, and the younger scholar's readings of the older figures' work also neglected the ambivalence written into these texts. Consider, for example, the collections of historical fiction which Warburg kept in an area of his library referred to as a 'poison chest'. This is not a purely perjorative phrase: historical fiction's 'poison'. As Charlotte Schoell-Glass has pointed out of the KBW's inclusion of racist material in the *Giftschrank*, 'Warburgs Diktum [...war] daß man den Teufel präsent haben müsse, um ihn jederzeit mit seinen eigenen Waffen schlagen zu können'.[184]

Not only scholarship of a speculative quality – 'historical fiction' – but also work which faces Gombrich's 'strong biological argument' against heritable memory, here becomes significant in taking exactly the kind of stand against ethnonationalist fantasies, combative rather than aloof, which 'the Republic of Letters' seemed unable to make, either during the struggle against Nazism or in subsequent years. Gombrich and other members of the 'Republic of Letters' preferred to subscribe to a universalism transcending questions of ethnicity, rather than attempting the engaged criticism of ethnonationalism and ethnic identity which we find Warburg and Freud working towards.

Yerushalmi acknowledges and evaluates Freud's attempt at this engagement when he addresses a portion of his book *Freud's Moses* directly to the founder psychoanalyst:

> For me the abiding significance of *Moses and Monotheism* lies, not in the specific answers you have given to the question of "how the Jews have come to be as they are," but in your uniquely powerful formulation of the question and its problematics. In addressing the matter, you have raised issues from which

[184] Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus*, p. 36.

> ordinary historians have tended to shy away – the phenomenology of religious tradition, the Jewish in particular; of collective memory, forgetting, anamnesis; of the psychological, rather than theological, relationships between Judaism and Christianity. And, presiding invisibly, the fiercely Jewish "godless Jew" who emerges and persists out of what seems to be a final and irreparable rupture in the tradition, and who seems himself without tradition in any traditional sense, in short – yourself, but hardly you alone.[185]

In this conception, Freud's Moses and Warburgian *Kulturwissenschaft* each form a daring riposte to the anti-Semitic nationalisms of Central Europe, one which preserves both the assimilationist move towards secularism – a 'Jewishness' independent of 'Judaism' – and the history of a distinctively 'Jewish' – as opposed to, say, 'Central European' – identity. In Warburg's case, the possibilities of this potentially interminable negotiation are hinted at by two diagrams, lodged among the portion of the Warburg *Nachlass* devoted to the *Mnemosyne* project. In one sketch, Warburg's life is drawn as a series of lines connecting Amsterdam, Hamburg, Strasbourg and Florence with the Arizona of his American travels and with an unknown point towards the East, bringing together the places of his experience with a mysterious Oriental point of origin. In the other, cities which drew Warburg's attention as a historian – Hamburg, Bruges, Wittenberg, Augsburg, Florence, Rome, Padua, Akon, Lüneburg, Baghdad – are set in the context of the geographical routes of Jewish emigration into Europe, from the Holy Land to Amsterdam, and from the Near East to Central Europe via Spanish and Italian cities; see Illustrations 1 and 2.[186] Both images complicate the issue of identity by combining personal experience and scholarly interests with the history of Jewish migration to Europe. There is no linear connection between the self and one's 'roots'; rather identity is projected as a kind of round-tour of one's experience, intellectual engagements, and ancestry.

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[185] Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses*, p. 86.

[186] My attention was drawn to these sketches by the brief discussion in Forster, pp. 40-41. The identification of the places mentioned and their significance owes much to Dorothea McEwan's kind assistance.

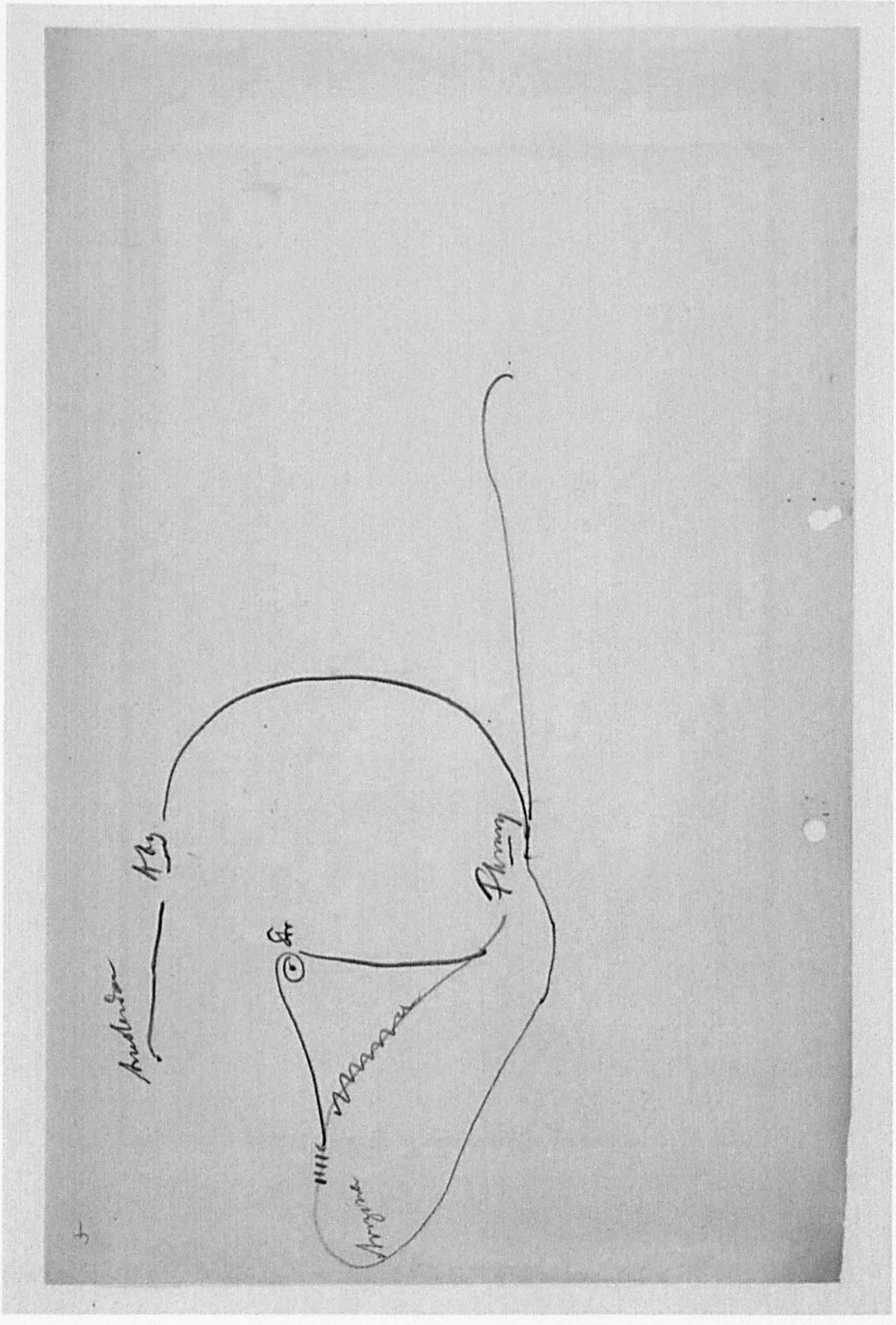

Illustration 1. Aby Warburg, autobiographical *Wanderkarte*. WIA, III.105.1.3, fol. 4.

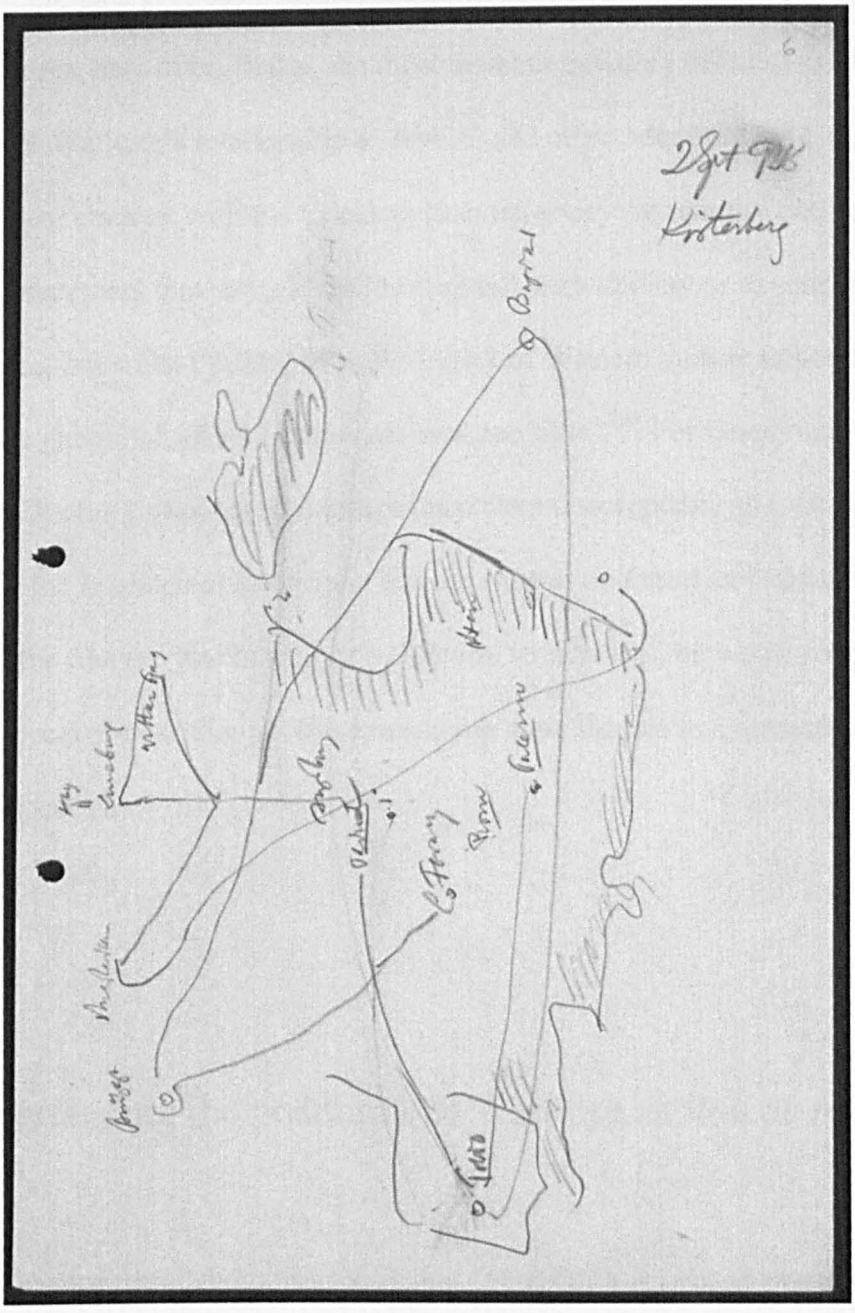

Illustration 2. Aby Warburg, autobiographical *Wanderkarte*. WIA, III, 105.1.3, fol. 6.

The exhaustive exegesis of these highly personal sketches would require a massive and intimate project of intellectual history focussed on Warburg.[187] For my present purposes, they offer, firstly, the most dramatic possible illustration of the complexity of Warburg's relationship to Jewish, and other, identities, and, secondly, illustrate a clear contrast with the 'cosmopolitan trajectory' of identity exemplified by Gombrich's statement that he had 'not the slightest wish to deny or to conceal my Jewish origins, but when I think of history I think of Western culture rather than the culture of the ghetto, of which I know, perhaps, too little'.[188] For Gombrich, both Freud's and Warburg's approaches to this issue were unacceptable and, through vehicles like the *Intellectual Biography* and the chapter on Freud in *Tributes* (which emphasised the founder psychoanalyst's *Gelehrte* tendencies), he would negate these troubling aspects of their thought by representing these figures in a manner which suited his own perspective.

5.6 Understanding the posthumous Warburg as *lieu de mémoire*

I have tried to show throughout this thesis that Gombrich's approach was not simply a product of Viennese emigration and devoted scientific rationalism, a humanist echo of 'cosmopolitan', Popperian thought. *Bildungskultur* for the émigré Gombrich was inflected by broad schools of thought including psychoanalysis as well as its Popperian critique and by personal contacts with figures as diverse as Hayek and Bing in the

[187] On less personal cultural-historical maps – '*Wanderkarten*' – devised by Warburg as 'heuristic tools' in his research, see Dorothea McEwan, 'Aby Warburg's (1866-1929) Dots and Lines: Mapping the Diffusion of Astrological Motifs in Art History?', *German Studies Review*, 26 (2006) 243-268.
[188] Gombrich, *A Lifelong Interest*, p. 28.

scholarly emigration. Aby Warburg was a key figure in the negotiation of these issues through the medium of scholarship.

If Gombrich was able in good faith to accuse other scholars of producing 'patterns of their own abstraction', as he did in conversation with Peter Burke,[189] it was because his own scholarly method was so profoundly entwined with his lived, everyday subjectivity – and if he disagreed with Freud and Warburg's approaches to Jewish identity, it was not for having never experienced their predicament between assimilation and persecution, as the correspondence of the late 1930s demonstrates. The 'Central European' identity, as described by Hacohen, marked not so much a repression of Jewishness as an alternative route out of that predicament, one fashioned by displaced and desperate persons at a critical moment of Nazi persecution and international conflict. I do not trace it out of a desire to pin down or 'unmask' the personal histories of figures such as Gombrich; it is of interest insofar as it shapes the history of scholarship. Yerushalmi writes as much, addressing Freud in *Freud's Moses*:

> I have not tried to pry any of your secrets out of mere curiosity. If I have at times attempted to recover fragments of your life, especially those that relate to your Jewish identity and some of which I believe you suppressed, it has been only for the sake of a better understanding of the conscious intention of your work, thinking you yourself would want it that way. I have not rummaged through your life in search of flaws.[190]

As Catherine Soussloff points out, the evacuation of Jewish identity from art history affected scholarship in such a way that the identity of scholars like Gombrich becomes a legitimate issue for today's practitioners of intellectual history. Their silence, she writes,

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[189] See 2.2.3.2 above.
[190] Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses*, p. 81-82.

> bears upon the written record itself, that is, what the historian has written, and upon the subsequent history of that writing in citation and in the practices of scholarship and art criticism, where identity and historiography converge and become manifest as discourse.[191]

However, one cannot broadly write that all scholars in this peer group withdrew into the *same* silence. Indeed, this thesis has sought to show the extent to which the émigré scholars formed a diverse group which resists any homogenisation by today's intellectual historian. The debates over Warburg conducted between Gombrich, Bing and Saxl reveal a wide and openly articulated range of concerns and agendas, with hugely different implications both for our understanding of Warburg, and of the relations between memory, 'rational' scholarship, and identity. As Bing stated in the 1960s, Warburg had posthumously become a figure 'obscured by the size of the legacy that he bequeathed to his heirs to be used and augmented'[192] – a *lieu de mémoire*, in the sense that Warburg was being, and continued to be, understood more through affective and inconsistent memory than prosaic, disciplined and above all self-questioning historical study. By indicating the differences in émigré scholars' approaches to the past, and specifically to Aby Warburg, we revive the potential of alternative Warburg legacies and offer an understanding of the emotional concerns underpinning the pre-eminent posthumous representation or *lieu de mémoire* of Aby Warburg, of which Gombrich, after 1970, was the definitive custodian.

Over the course of this thesis I have explored the ways in which the posthumous scholarly representation of Aby Warburg, above all at the hands of his biographer Ernst Gombrich, served as a *lieu de mémoire*. Warburg's scholarly representation was a symbolic site of remembrance with which Gombrich personally invested an emotive and powerful understanding of humanism as a progressive, reasoned and ethnically

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[191] Soussloff, p. 2.
[192] Bing, 'A.M. Warburg', p. 300.

unmarked approach to the business of life and knowledge. This understanding was born out of Gombrich's upbringing in Viennese *Bildungskultur*, but tempered by the experience of emigration and the critical-rationalist philosophy of Karl Popper.

With the investment he made in Warburg's scholarly representation, Gombrich empowered émigré *Gebildete*, at least potentially, to avoid ethnonationalist persecution and its postwar legacy by taking on an identity – 'Central European' or 'member of the Republic of Letters' – which was ethnically unmarked but no less authorised by a *lieu de mémoire* than French national identity, in Nora's conception, is authorised and empowered by the memorabilia of the Republic. Gombrich's sane but sensitive Warburg could be as much a hero of the Republic of Letters as any folk hero is for their nation. Arguably, this reinforcement of the imagined community of cosmopolitan scholars was valuable, above all, to Austrian exiles of Jewish background like Gombrich who were doubly estranged from their homeland by its profound anti-Semitism and the odd circumstances of its history as a postimperial rump state.

Although much of the above refers to Gombrich's investments in the Warburg *lieu de mémoire,* Pierre Nora has of course always been careful to emphasise the plural, performative, dynamic, and contestable aspects of *lieux de mémoire*. A *lieu de mémoire* is a zone in which remembrancers – from Bing to Binswanger and Gombrich to Matthew Rampley – continue to engage in conflict, cooperation, negotiation and exploitation with regard to the past. In the case of Aby Warburg, we have seen how personal disagreements over Warburg's memory can be empirically traced down to the individual penstrokes in the archive, and on a larger scale we have developed an understanding of the effect that the broad context of the Institute's position in British

academia and émigrés' position in Britain more generally had on the shaping of Warburg's remembrance.

At the same time, the invocation of the *lieu de mémoire* did not only serve an audience of émigré scholars, whether – as Saxl and Bing intended – by keeping alive the memory of a favoured predecessor, or in accordance with Gombrich's perspective by embodying the values of the Central European *Gelehrtenrepublik*. Warburg's memory also made an impact on the course of British art history, in part through the early interventions of Bing and Saxl, but above all through Gombrich's *Intellectual Biography* and related works.

These, in their avoidance of the problematic, radical and pathological Warburg in favour of a representation more congenial to the Popperian critical rationalism and *Gelehrtenrepublik* loyalties of its author, sit well with Perry Anderson's allegation that discussion of basic human values in British national culture was reinforced in its shying from a more radical path by imported intellectual attitudes from Central Europe. However, although Anderson's groundbreaking 'Components of the National Culture' hit on the key issue of what it was that émigré scholars brought to intellectual life in their host country and how this gift was shaped by the experience of migration, the primary sources drawn on in my research – above all those chronicling Bing and Gombrich's work on the Warburg biography – have indicated the difficulty of ever decisively testing so broad a thesis about the emigration. The best that can be offered is a small-scale exploration of the impact a figure like Gombrich's particular concerns, shaped by emigration and embodied in his scholarship, had on subsequent work in his field.

In the conclusion to my thesis, we will examine the ramifications of the project I have undertaken for our broader understanding of Gombrich's scholarship; the potential for eliciting alternative lines of thought from the legacy of Aby Warburg; and Gombrich's own afterlife as a *lieu de mémoire.*

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Understanding Gombrich's Warburg

In this thesis, I have attempted to give an explanatory account of Ernst Gombrich's relationship with Aby Warburg as the latter's most authoritative and famous postwar biographer and scholarly commentator. In doing so, the project has touched on many intriguing and interconnected elements in the scholarly career of Ernst Gombrich, especially the devoted humanism diagnosed as conservative by Perry Anderson and Gombrich's at times fiercely articulated ambivalences on the topic of Jewish identity. The account has demanded a methodology of 'reading works for lives', a framework explaining how scholarship may be related to the context of its production and the emotional concerns of its author. The anthropologically based approach I have taken, attending to intrapsychic concerns as much as social context, and empirical research as much as theoretical discussion, has raised issues of memory and inheritance that are of pressing importance to contemporary intellectual history. In addition, the thesis has discussed archival materials relevant for any account of the project, undertaken by the Warburg Institute in the decades following its founder's death, to memorialise Aby Warburg through scholarship.

I have made the argument that Ernst Gombrich's alleged conservatism, his difficulties with issues of ethnic and above all Jewish identity, are aspects of a commitment to the humanist tradition of *Bildung*, shaped by an almost unspeakable encounter with Nazi and pre-Nazi ideologies of race. After the Nuremberg laws and the

Shoah, Gombrich could not bring himself to attempt to negotiate a secular Jewish identity, as Warburg and Freud had tried. Nor, however, could he quite retreat absolutely into a cosmopolitan and universal 'Republic of Letters', unsullied by ethnic or national identities. There was always the need to deal with one's heritage: identities as an Austrian, a German-speaker, a person of Jewish background, a scholar and a naturalised British subject. Gombrich once made the rather oblique comment on his past: 'It's like retaining an accent: you remain what, remain what you are.'[1]

The consequence of these concerns for the legacy of Aby Warburg was that Gombrich's account of the Hamburg art historian served as a *lieu de mémoire*, an emotionally charged locus for the energies of the past, within which Gombrich located his own anxieties and concerns. This is not to declare Gombrich's representation of Warburg invalid by comparison to competing versions from contemporary scholarship, but rather to trace its limitations and those limitations' origin.

6.1.1 Thinking the past through biography: Gombrich's Kokoschka

A piece written by Gombrich on Oscar Kokoschka (1886-1980) in 1986 gives an example of how my thesis' approach can be seen to illuminate our understanding of Gombrich's work.

'Kokoschka in his Time' gives a historical account of the artist's career from Vienna, through exile, to the postwar establishment of his summer 'School of Seeing' in

[1] IWM 4521/03/01-03.

Salzburg.[2] Like the figure of Schubert conjured for the Musicus Concentus in Florence,[3] Kokoschka provides Gombrich with a bridge to the pre-emigration Viennese milieu. Gombrich can then exploit this link to work out his own concerns, his own history, and his own cultural identity.

The opening of the piece presents us with that 'chain of memory' which Gombrich extended to Schubert but denied to Warburg. The author counts himself amongst those 'lucky enough to meet O.K. (as Kokoschka was always called)', and makes Kokoschka's charms vivid for the reader with a paragraph in adulation of 'a spellbinder [...] a splendid raconteur [...whose] conversations would range widely, for he appeared to have read everything and to have met everybody'.[4]

Kokoschka suits Gombrich's own resistance to radical change with his decrying of the present day in conversation with Gombrich, considering it an age in which 'everything went much too fast'.[5]

Gombrich, with a patronising and elegant tone, suggests that radicalism is always overly simplistic. Kokoschka's

> failure to conform to the stereotype [of the artist who 'expresses the future'] seemed all the more puzzling as he was known to have been a revolutionary artist in his youth, and a revolutionary, in terms of '1066 and All That', must of course be a Good Thing, while a *retardataire* is surely a Bad Thing.[6]

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[2] Ernst Gombrich, 'Oscar Kokoschka in his Time', in Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, pp. 142-161.
[3] See 2.2.5 above.
[4] Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, p.142.
[5] Ibid.,, p. 143.
[6] Ibid.,, p. 143.

Gombrich sternly warns such uncritical fans of radicalism that 'history is more than one-dimensional [...and i]f there was a period that was emphatically not one-dimensional it was that first decade of our century when Kokoschka first appeared on the scene in Vienna'.[7]

The debates surrounding 'Vienna 1900' which so troubled Gombrich at the Austrian Cultural Forum a decade after this lecture are here dismissed, and doubly so for being dismissed at one remove. Gombrich does not even address them himself but rather describes 'Kokoschka's Vienna' as

> that Vienna which has recently become the subject of so much informed and uninformed comment, splendidly and succinctly dismissed by Richard Calvocoressi in a brief paragraph of his introduction to the catalogue of the Kokoschka exhibition at the Tate Gallery.[8]

Calvocoressi's writing, which Gombrich does not cite directly, is hardly a devastating refutation of the prevailing approach to the 'cultural efflorescence' some scholars and other commentators have identified in *Jahrhundertwende* Vienna. Calvocoressi writes:

> The picture of 'Vienna 1900' as a homogeneous group of artists and intellectuals, many of them from the liberal Jewish bourgeoisie, battling against a stolid establishment is largely a myth. Ideas certainly cross-fertilized but not everybody knew one another intimately. Within the avant-garde itself (if such a self-contained entity really existed) there were factions and animosities: that between Loos and Hoffmann, for example, or Kraus and Freud – or, for that matter, Kraus and practically everyone. Different ideals and values co-existed but more often clashed.[9]

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[7] Ibid.,, p. 143.
[8] Ibid.,, p. 143.
[9] Richard Calvocoressi, 'Vienna and Berlin 1908-1916', in Tate Gallery, *Oskar Kokoschka 1886-1980* (London: Tate Gallery, 1986), pp. 52-55 (p. 52).

Calvocoressi attacks those attributing the *fin-de-siecle* Viennese cultural moment with a special significance, as if it was not possible to examine the wider context of a point in history and still acknowledge variations among that moment's individual historical actors. This serves Gombrich, in his essay on Kokoschka, by allowing him to sweep contemporary scholarly comment, both 'informed and uninformed', away. Gombrich is then free to address Vienna's intellectual life through historical actors of his own choosing, including Adolf Loos and Karl Kraus, figures 'somehow over life-size [...whose] nostalgic respect for the past makes it impossible to characterize [them] as revolutionaries in the stereotypical sense of the word'.[10]

Gombrich cites various materials establishing Loos' call for a return to tradition, the discipline of classical aesthetics, and a culture associated with the peasantry, opposed to the '*déraciné*' city-dweller. Gombrich explains that, 'like Loos, Kokoschka never lost his respect for the European tradition that is grounded in ancient Greece', thus firmly grounding his subject in that ethnocentrically (though not quite exclusively) Western tradition which was the foundation of his own humanism.[11] Kraus is presented as a similarly traditionalist artisan of language, one who 'contrasted the natural language of the people with the journalistic clichés of a meretricious press and never ceased to express his veneration for the poets and playwrights of the past – Goethe, Raimund, Nestroy and Stifter – whose natural instinct for language would shame his corrupt age'.[12]

Mid-way through his discussion of Kraus, Gombrich offers, almost as an aside, that rarest of items in his prolific output – 'a word here about that much-discussed topic

[10] Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, pp. 143-4.
[11] Ibid.,, p. 145.
[12] Ibid.,, pp. 145-6.

– Vienna at the turn of the century'.[13] The analysis Gombrich offers is close to that of Pulzer and Baumann,[14] with Austria as 'the last survival of a feudal society' facing 'all the disruptive influences' of industrialisation and newly arriving Jewish immigrants upsetting both 'the upper crust of the privileged and the rural population'.[15]

Kraus' Jewish identity is acknowledged, along with Freud's and Mahler's, alongside a comment that the satirist 'was wholly on the side of the old established Jewish families who preached and practised assimilation'.[16] The complexities of this position are not, however, examined, and instead simple, straightforward accommodation with Austrian imperial culture is implicitly condoned. Gombrich comments on Kraus' 'respect for the cultural tradition of language and of style [which] made him wince at the slightest solecism or breach of decorum perpetrated by immigrant journalists, who became the target of his merciless satire', but does not connect this back to the Kraus who supported 'the natural language of the people' against journalistic cliché.[17] The consequent implication, that an ethnically Austrian 'natural language' existed and was contaminated by both cliché and immigration, is left unchallenged.

Gombrich's sense of himself as an apolitical scholar also finds resonance in the article's own cast of characters: 'like Kraus, Kokoschka never committed himself to one political party'.[18] Just as Gombrich would denounce both 'the Red and the Black' for their failure to recognise the real threat of the 'Brown' Nazis, the failed left-wing attempt at armed resistance against Austrofascism of 1924 is passed over when

[13] Ibid.,, p. 146.
[14] See 3.2 above.
[15] Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, p. 146.
[16] Ibid.,, p. 147.
[17] Ibid.,, p. 147.
[18] Ibid.,, p. 157.

discussing Kraus' politics.[19] Rather Kraus is said to have supported Dollfuss (here only 'semi-fascist') to resist the Nazis, where socialism offers only 'glib and irresponsible talk of civil war'.[20]

This self-consciously 'sensible', middle-ground approach extends to the issue of mental disturbance which was so key to Gombrich's account of Aby Warburg. Creations from a time when Kokoschka 'certainly believed that he had no right to censor the words and images that he felt welling up from the depth of his being' are described by Gombrich as 'products of his youth [...] pretty crazy in all conscience'.[21] These are not to be regarded as symptomatic of mental illness, Gombrich tells us, because Kokoschka's personal correspondence remained coherent at this time. He does mention the issue 'that the demotion of reason in the philosophies of Nietzsche, Bergson and other thinkers of the age was to have dire consequences. It certainly increased the appeal of Nazi ideology, which spoke of 'thinking with the blood'' – however, 'Kokoschka himself was immune to this appeal'.[22] Like Gombrich's Warburg, it was 'the traumatic experience of the First World War [...which] reinforced [Kokoschka's] deep-rooted distrust of rationality'.[23]

In the realm of the psyche, Kokoschka is also conjured against Freud – it seems that Gombrich's hated interpretative frameworks are no more to be supported than political parties. Of Kokoschka's paintings, Gombrich writes:

> Many critics have yielded to the temptation of linking them with Sigmund Freud's probings of the human soul, but it so happens that I was present when Kokoschka came across such a remark in a draft that had been sent to him and

[19] IWM 4521/03/01-03.
[20] Gombrich, *Topics of Our Time*, p. 147.
[21] Ibid.,, p. 156.
[22] Ibid.,, p. 156.
[23] Ibid.,, p. 156.

> he nearly threw a tantrum. 'Again this Freud!', he shouted. I took the opportunity of asking him whether he had known about Freud in these years and he said, 'Of course not.' I cannot guarantee that he was right, but frankly I find very little similarity between Kokoschka's portrayals of human beings and Freud's theory of neuroses.[24]

While Freud is thus left a vaguely unconvincing figure, Kokoschka's own powers of penetration into the human soul are validated by another anecdote:

> Some years ago I had been asked to review Edith Hoffmann's monograph on Kokoschka for the BBC Third Programme and came across her characterization of the portrait of Lotte Franzos painted in 1909. The author writes: 'here again Kokoschka shows his particular gift for the rendering of "personal attitude" – in this case youthful coyness, the reserve of the middle-class woman who neither could nor would let herself go, and perhaps the pensiveness of one who has unexpectedly discovered that respectability is not everything.' Now it so happens that my mother had known Lotte Franzos quite well in those days, and without saying why I wanted to know, I asked her to describe her to me. She described her as precious (*preziös*); she could not let herself go but she considered herself very free. I then showed my mother Edith Hoffmann's characterization based on Kokoschka's portrait and she accepted it as quite correct. What more can you ask for?[25]

With this almost self-parodic example of the empirical scientific method, Gombrich here endorses Kokoschka while doubly reinforcing the 'chain of memory' back to the Viennese *Bürgertum* through the figure of his own mother. Kokoschka ultimately becomes a valuable symbol of this chain of memory, alongside Loos, Kraus and, implicitly, Gombrich: figures allied in a 'faith', albeit 'non-conformist', 'in the wisdom of tradition against the corruption of their age'.[26] Gombrich asks himself: 'Was Kokoschka's stance just an expression of his contrariness? The more I reflect about it, the less do I think so. To him, and to his mentors, the sacred heritage of our culture could be jettisoned only at our peril.'[27] Gombrich finds that, by holding true to this heritage and a belief in the importance of sense perception to art (against 'the view that

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[24] Ibid.,, p. 154.
[25] Ibid.,, p. 155.
[26] Ibid.,, p. 159.
[27] Ibid.,, pp. 159-160.

all styles of painting were systems of signs [...] which had nothing direct to do with the way that we see the world'), Kokoschka 'had become a man with a mission, and I think his life's work shows that he could announce to posterity: 'mission fulfilled'.'[28]

For Gombrich, the artist achieves a successful negotiation of the turbulent twentieth century, but also of the difficult questions of ethnicity, tradition, innovation, and understanding the human soul or character. The article on Kokoschka forms a *lieu de mémoire* for the deceased artist – brief but detailed, as if worked with watchmaker's tools. It becomes, like the various studies of Warburg, a place where, through the technique of biography and the resonance of a shared background, Gombrich can fashion both a history and an identity for himself: relevant and contemporary, but preferring tradition and continuity over fashion or radicalism; erudite but encyclopaedically so, rather than deliberately contentious or polemical; empirical rather than speculative; Central European or even Austrian, but not quite ethnically marked – even where there were side comments on the dynamics of assimilation; aware of the dangers of emotional distress, but ultimately rational, reasonable and mentally secure. The investigations presented in the preceding chapters of my thesis illuminate and sharpen our focus on the various anxieties and traces of historical context which shape Gombrich's text.

This is not, however, the sole value of the work undertaken in the current thesis. It also affects our understanding of Warburg's intellectual legacy, and its potential to move in new directions for the twenty-first century.

[28] Ibid.,, p. 161.

6.2 Rethinking Warburg's legacy: opportunities and potentials

The theory of the *lieu de mémoire,* developed by Pierre Nora and applied to the history of scholarship in the present thesis, can point us to one potential alternative path for the legacy of Warburg's thought. Nora's work, with its attention to the affective legacy of the past, arguably represents a strange meeting of the parallel approaches to memory carved out by what is broadly called the *Annales* school and the neglected Warburgian legacy of the *engramme.*

Nora's own theories develop out of the work on classical understandings of the 'sites of memory' carried out at the Warburg Institute by Frances A. Yates (1899-1981). Nora used Yates' 1969 *The Art of Memory* in his work, drawing inspiration from the tradition of classical mnemonic techniques examined by the Warburg Institute scholar.[29] Yates' introduction to her book acknowledges that the germ of her research was, in turn, suggested by Gombrich and nurtured to full growth by Gertrud Bing.[30] *The Art of Memory* traces memorial technique from the ancient Greeks and Romans through a European tradition into the thought of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Yates' book goes beyond that rationalist attitude of the Warburg Institute associated with Gombrich; memory is looked at not just in terms of 'mnemotechnics', historical techniques of remembrance, but also the 'turbulent', affective and dynamic forces of memory. This resonates with Bing's interest in related aspects of Warburgian scholarship, raising the question, too vast to pursue here, of whether Bing's own

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[29] See Pierre Nora, 'From *Lieux de mémoire* to *Realms of Memory*', in *Realms of Memory*, pp. xv-xxiv (p. xv).
[30] Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Pimlico, 1992), pp. 14-15.

intellectual legacy was posthumously perpetuated within the Warburg Institute as an alternative to the Gombrich supremacy described by the *Burlington Magazine*.[31] It is significant in this regard that Yates' acknowledgement of Bing's input records Bing's feeling that

> the problems of the mental image, of the activation of images, of the grasp of reality through images – problems ever present in the history of the art of memory – were close to those which preoccupied Aby Warburg [...] Whether this book is what she hoped for I can now never know.[32]

Even Gombrich's own essay on Yates in his collected *Tributes* to 'interpreters of our cultural tradition' is suggestive of how she already, and certainly more than Gombrich, did engage with the more uncertain and affective zones of historical research and provide a seed for that 'alternative Warburg' I am postulating here.

The essay – tellingly entitled 'The Evaluation of Esoteric Currents' – is as close as Gombrich ever came to endorsing the imaginative 'novelistic' approach of which he was so dismissive in the work of Freud.[33] Here Yates' intellectual strengths are depicted as deriving from an unconventional educational background: 'Hard-headed historians [...] did not quite know at first how to place her.'[34] Those strengths lend themselves to the reconstruction of 'the way people and events were reflected in the minds of contemporaries',[35] the writing of a history which encompasses 'the hopes which never materialised, the attempts to prevent the outbreak of wars, the futile efforts to solve differences by conciliatory methods [...] as much [...] as the terrible events which

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[31] See 2.1 above.
[32] Yates, p. 14.
[33] See E.H. Gombrich, 'The Evaluation of Esoteric Currents: A Commemoration of the Work of Frances A. Yates (1899-1981)', in Gombrich, *Tributes*, pp. 211-219.
[34] Gombrich, *Tributes*, p. 213.
[35] Ibid., p. 212.

falsify them'.[36] Gombrich uncritically cites Yates' rather novelistic description of Giordano Bruno as 'this slender little man with the large dreamy eyes and the chestnut-brown hair' and even endorses her attempt to 'penetrate this turbulent story in order to reconstruct the way it may have been read by contemporaries'.[37] Of Yates' cultural-historical studies using visual evidence, Gombrich writes: 'She gave a new emphasis and a new twist to this approach by concentrating on those ephemeral images which only the historical imagination can reconstruct'.[38] Gombrich might have 'occasionally felt a little giddy when trying to follow her reading of the evidence' but came,

> to think that there is a quality in her historical intuition which we disregard at our peril. I mean the rapport she had established with the people of the past. She had always been a reader of primary rather than of secondary sources and though her disregard of established views would make one pause, one had to concede that she had come to understand the mentality of past ages with greater immediacy than most of us.[39]

When Gombrich writes of this empathic engagement with primary materials, or cites Yates on Ramón Lull – her project was to 're-open the problem of Ramón Lull and his Art through suggesting some fresh ways of approaching the problem' – he is close to describing the encounter I suggest is possible between Warburg himself and today's intellectual historian.[40] However, Gombrich closes down Yates' legacy in concluding his essay by asking not who could continue to generate such intuition but rather, 'who will be allowed to acquire that expert knowledge in many fields to prove her suggestions right or wrong?' Nonetheless, it is telling that even in the Warburg Institute under Gombrich's Directorship there survived an intuitive, affective approach to the past, later fostered by Pierre Nora's appropriation of Yates.

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[36] Frances Yates, cited in Gombrich, *Tributes*, p. 213.
[37] Gombrich, *Tributes*, p. 212.
[38] Ibid., p. 214.
[39] Ibid., p. 215.
[40] Yates, cited in Gombrich, *Tributes*, p. 218.

Nora, with his 'memory-individuals' and his magical, emotional *lieux de mémoire*, develops Yates' study of the Renaissance art of memory into an analysis of memory as an ongoing affective phenomenon, a vision of the present day in which the past is immanent, if in crisis. Bringing Nora, and the issues raised by the *lieu de mémoire* project, to bear on the Warburgian tradition in exile restores a complex and long-suppressed element of emotion and unreason and makes that tradition theoretically richer. Warburg's thought, for all that it was never academically formalised by its author, can be made to bear the burden of serious historical enquiry today.

As Alon Confino's discussion of 'Collective Memory and Cultural History' acknowledges, Warburg's writings could be 'no less suggestive in terms of method' than those of Halbwachs.[41] Confino begins the process, continued a short distance here, of connecting Warburg to the French tradition of scholarship on history and memory. It remains true, as Confino says, that the scholar who will uncover 'what kind of an intellectual genealogy existed between a sociologist [Halbwachs], a historian [*Annales* co-founder Marc Bloch], and an art historian [Warburg] who shared the notion of memory and the history of culture' is yet to come,[42] and this thesis makes no pretension to undertake that mammoth project. However, there is a value in having Warburgian and post-Halbwachsian approaches to the representation of the past meet, theoretically speaking, on the terrain of memory studies.

We must, of course, be cautious to avoid the games of 'theoretical juxtaposition' which characterised the depiction of Warburg alongside Walter Benjamin, Karl Kraus, the pioneers of cinema and others in much post-World War 2 writing on the Hamburg *Kulturwissenschaftler*. However, recalling Gertrud Bing's vision of Warburg's work as

[41] Confino, 'Collective Memory', p.1392.
[42] Ibid., p.1392.

'a mine, a central shaft [...] from which galleries branch off at various levels right and left, each exploiting a different vein of the same substance', the suggestion is that the galleries or paths deriving from Warburg's work may be brought into contact with those whose origins lie with other 'central shafts' such as the French tradition of memory studies...[43]

A precursor to this contact, indicating the distinctive value of Warburgian and *Annales* approaches, can be detected in Roger Chartier's juxtaposition of contemporary work by *Annales* historian Lucien Febvre (1878-1956) and the Warburg-trained Erwin Panofsky.[44] In an essay 'Intellectual History or Sociocultural History? The French Trajectories', Chartier cites a 1948 book review by Febvre which states:

> We must not underestimate the role of ideas in history. Nor may we subordinate them to the action of [personal] interests. We must show that a Gothic cathedral, the marketplace of Ypres, and one of those great cathedrals of ideas such as those Etienne Gilson describes to us in his book [*La philosophie du Moyen Age*] – are daughters of a single epoch, sisters reared in the same household.[45]

Chartier interprets Febvre as suggesting

> a reading that postulates for a given epoch the existence of "structures of thought" (the term is not his), which are determined by the socioeconomic evolutions that organise intellectual constructions, such as artistic productions, and collective practices, such as philosophical thoughts.[46]

Chartier, placing this interpretation alongside a reading of Panofsky's contemporary *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, argues that both scholars,

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[43] Bing, 'A.M. Warburg', p. 304.
[44] On Panofsky, see Holly.
[45] Febvre, cited in Roger Chartier, 'Intellectual History or Sociocultural History?', in *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives,* ed. by Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Kaplan (London and Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 13-46 (p.17).
[46] Chartier, p.18.

> in a parallel fashion and quite probably without reciprocal influence, were attempting in the same period to equip themselves with the intellectual means to conceptualise this "spirit of the times", this "Zeitgeist" – which [...], for Panofsky as for Febvre, is much more what must be explained than what explains.[47]

Without explicitly referring to the influence of Warburg, Chartier indicates that

> Febvre's notion of mental equipment differs in a number of ways from the idea that Panofsky developed at about the same time. First of all, the very word equipment (*outillage*) and the expression *outils mentaux* that Febvre sometimes used – which suggest the quasi-objective existence of a panoply of intellectual instruments (words, symbols, concepts, and so on) at the disposition of thought – contrast with Panofsky's manner of defining the mental habit, the group of unconscious schemes, of internalized principles that give their unity to an epoch's ways of thinking, no matter what the object of thought might be.[48]

Chartier goes on to distinguish Febvre's 'intellectual equipment' from Panofsky's emphasis, in which 'mental habits point back to their conditions of inculcation, thus to the "habit-forming forces."'[49] While Febvre's *outils mentaux* lie at the 'disposition of thought', Panofsky's distinctly different approach to the same historiographical issues resonates with Warburg's disruptive, disturbing *engramme*, the symbol capable of overwhelming the human subject, invested as it is with 'a charge of latent energy [...:] the way in which it is discharged may be positive or negative – as murder or rescue, as fear or triumph, as pagan maenad or Christian Magdalen'.[50]

More recently, the historian Charlotte Schoell-Glass has argued for Warburg's *engramme* as a way of understanding the turbulent journey of Jewish identity and anti-Semitism from antiquity to the 'modern era'.[51] Elsewhere, Schoell-Glass has suggested that Warburg's 'engramme accounts for our capability to represent a sign in our minds,

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[47] Ibid., p.18.
[48] Ibid., pp.20-21.
[49] Ibid., p.21.
[50] Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, p.248.
[51] See 4.3.3 above.

it fills a space that is neither the sign nor the signified. Structurally, it is the equivalent of the elusive and all-important "interpretant" in Peircean semiotics'.[52]

The interpretant might roughly be defined as that element of a sign, in C.S. Peirce's schema, which mediates between the representamen (the element which conveys information) and the object to which that representamen refers. Floyd Merrell suggests that the interpretant is 'roughly speaking [...], close to what we would usually take as the sign's meaning',[53] the 'light', as it were, in which one connects the representamen and its object. If we were to add a historical dimension to this definition, it could be thought equivalent to the *lieu de mémoire* or, as Schoell-Glass begins to point out, the Warburgian *engramme*. These concepts theorise the 'light' of the past's afterlife in a present under whose conditions social actors – artists, historians, all of us – must operate, signify and interpret.

Such a definition of the *engramme* has the potential to circumvent the difficulties scholars quite rightly have with the racial aspect of Warburg's theory of hereditary memory, to which Gombrich objected so strenuously. Confino plays down the biological terminology in his account of Warburg, but Warburg's use of biological and physical-science terminology with regard to inherited memory is arguably metaphorical and poetic.

A rhetorical and metaphorical 'blood memory', labelled as such to lend dramatic effect – bearing in mind Richard Woodfield's argument that 'Warburg was a great

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[52] Charlotte Schoell-Glass, '"Serious Issues": The Last Plates of Warburg's Picture Atlas *Mnemosyne*', in *Art History as Cultural History*, pp.183-208 (p.199).
[53] Floyd Merrell, 'Charles Sanders Peirce's Concept of the Sign', in *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics and Linguistics*, ed. by Paul Cobley (Routledge: London and New York, 2001), pp. 28-39 (p. 28).

dramatist who was capable of stating contradictory cases with complete conviction'[54] – may in fact be no more offensive *per se* than Peirce's nebulous 'interpretant'. Gombrich's interpretations, taking Warburg's challenging and quasi-poetic terminology literally, create the problem of the racially discriminating 'blood memory' which – unsurprisingly, given the contemporaneity of 'blood and soil' nationalism – troubled him in *Mnemosyne* and Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*. It can seem, at times, that Gombrich is as guilty of 'thinking with blood' in his response to ethnonationalism as his Nazi persecutors were.

We have previously noted Freud's justification of interdisciplinary moves in addressing the question of inherited memory – 'I had a right to take out of ethnological literature what I might need for the work of analysis.'[55] Such moves resonate with the argument of a later *Annales* historian, Jacques Le Goff, over the term *mentalité*:

> The history of science is full of examples of the transference of notions and concepts. A word or concept arises in a particular field but soon loses its power, only to be taken up in a neighbouring area where it proceeds to flourish. Why, then, should *mentalité* not succeed in the historical field where it has failed in psychology?[56]

The same argument can be made with regard to Warburg's densely formulated notions of memory. What no longer holds for the biological or physical sciences may still operate as a metaphor in the field of cultural history. Indeed, as Bill Schwarz points out of the 'bad phenomenology' of the West Indian émigré intellectuals he studies, the uppermost virtue of an intellectual resource is not always 'philosophical nicety, or

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[54] Woodfield, 'Warburg's "Method"', p.272.
[55] Freud, 'Moses and Monotheism', p. 380. See also 5.5 above.
[56] Jacques Le Goff, 'Mentalities: a history of ambiguities', in *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology*, ed. by Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press and Editions de la Maison des Sciences De L'Homme, 1985), pp. 166-180 (p.172). Richard Woodfield connects *mentalité* history to Warburg's approach as an aside in Woodfield, 'Warburg's "Method"', p.260.

technical sophistication [...] Lack of internal consistency could work in fruitful ways'.[57] The present thesis is not a treatise on theories of memory and perhaps offers a 'bad' theory of memory in Schwarz's sense. It has, however, sought to explain Gombrich's work on Warburg in a way that opens up alternative engagements with Warburg's intellectual contributions, including his theory of memory. Indeed, the thesis makes that explanation using an approach which itself might lead to a potential alternative.

Returning to Schwarz also permits us to imagine stretching the historiography presented here, and in the thesis as a whole, beyond the domains of 'Central Europe'. Insofar as my thesis is an exercise in British cultural history, it must be at least potentially capable of acknowledging traditions of immigration other than the 'Central European'. For Schwarz, it

> may even be that the migrant experience [of 'West Indians'] gave *that* past – the history of slavery and colonialism – a new salience in *this* present – the moment of decolonization itself. This is not to invoke a generalized, abstract idea of the-past-in-the-present. On the contrary, it is to tell of an embodied, lived historical experience, in which political realities in the present recomposed the shape of the past, and brought it into consciousness in the present [...] Let me just suggest that in the future the most profound impact of Caribbean thought may be on our – on native British – capacities to imagine the past, and to strive to bring it to consciousness.[58]

Schwarz's statement allows us to raise the question of whether intellectuals from West Indian and German-speaking cultures brought different ways of thinking the past to 'British national culture' (the term is apostrophised, and inadequate) in the wake of the Second World War.

A revived and reinvigorated Warburgian approach to memory, one which lets us make connections between the semiotics of Peirce and Caribbean migration to Britain,

[57] Schwarz, p.110.
[58] Ibid., p.111.

between the *Annales* school and the question of ethnicity in German-speaking Europe, may be the tool which allows future scholars to approach this problem, exploiting the open-ended character of memory studies within the interdisciplinary environment of today's academy.

6.3 Gombrich's legacy: repeated opportunities, frustrated potentials

While the theoretical and topical scope of a re-thought Warburgian tradition might be open-ended, however, so is a more conservative exploitation of this tradition following in the manner of Gombrich's represented Warburg.

That Gombrich's account of Warburg has its own legacy is evidenced by a 2002 essay written by former Warburg Institute director Nicholas Mann and published in a volume on *The British Contribution to the Europe of the Twenty-First Century.* 'Two-Way Traffic: the Warburg Institute as a Microcosm of Cultural Exchange between Britain and Europe' presents a history of the Institute as 'a remarkable, and possibly unique, instance of two-way cultural transmission' which nonetheless speaks to 'a wider and more general phenomenon'.[59] Mann's account neutralises tension and controversy in favour of a kind of antitheoretical, pragmatic, empirical approach – the 'British intellectual tradition' of Anderson's 'Components of the National Culture' – of the kind Gombrich emphasised during his own association with the Institute. To simply note the

[59] Nicholas Mann, 'Two-Way Traffic: the Warburg Institute as a Microcosm of Cultural Exchange between Britain and Europe' in *The British Contribution to the Europe of the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Basil Markesinnis (Hart: Oxford and Portland, Orgeon, 2002), pp. 93-104 (p.93).

'speed with which the Institute established itself as a centre of intellectual activity' in the 1930s is to pass over both the tensions surrounding its existence which are recorded in the archives and even the possibility that this haste was in part motivated by the desperation of exile.[60] Constancy is favoured over a narrative of intellectual dynamism: we are told that

> by the end of the Second World War, Warburg's method and the institution that he had created to further it had effectively become naturalised British citizens while yet remaining profoundly European in origins and outlook [...] the succeeding fifty-six years have confirmed that equilibrium.[61]

The complex negotiations by which Gombrich and others, including Saxl and Bing, inherited the 'Warburg method' – no easy concept to define! – are passed over and, indeed, over half a century of scholarship is portrayed as 'effective naturalisation' leading to comfortable and confirmed 'equilibrium'. That such negotiations cannot quite be effaced even in such an account as Mann's is evident from his comment that the Institute today is 'for all its continental origins, ineffably English [...] in its understated scholarly positivism'.[62] This phrase, begging questions of national identity and intellectual tradition, resonates with Gombrich's intellectual trajectory and also with Perry Anderson's thesis, but Mann does not even gesture towards expanding his statement into a question of intellectual history. Rather, the British Warburg Institute's international work in training and research is presented as 'a tribute to its continental origins, and its membership of a République des Lettres that was alive and well in the Weimar Republic, and that has survived into the twenty-first century'.[63]

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[60] Ibid., p.95.
[61] Ibid., p.102.
[62] Ibid., p.104.
[63] Ibid., p.103.

Mann cannot be criticised for what his text is not intended to be – the demands of a publication promoting an image of 'Britain in Europe' at the dawn of the twenty-first century will not coincide with those of a critical and painstaking intellectual history – but the particular ways in which the Institute's heritage is reduced and packaged speak to the avoidances and *aporiae* traced in this project.

It is also the case that Gombrich himself, deceased in 2001, now has his own afterlife as a representation and even *lieu de mémoire.*

On 5 February, 2002, a commemoration event was held by the Warburg Institute at the Institute of Education's Logan Hall. The venue, where Gombrich had given his last public lecture, was attended by notables including the German and Austrian ambassadors, numerous lords, ladies, knights and ranking figures from business as well as from museums, galleries, and the academy.

The speeches made at the event were reported in the *Warburg Institute Newsletter* of 2003.[64] Host Charles Hope

> expressed the debt of gratitude owed to Ernst Gombrich by the academic community in general 'for opening their eyes to a type of scholarship that was profoundly original, humane and accessible' and by the Warburg Institute in particular for the prestige which he brought it and for the ways in which he fought for its interests and values over a period of more than 60 years.

The *Newsletter* reports Hope's argument that the best tribute to Gombrich would be to

[64] All quotations from speeches at this event from *Warburg Institute Newsletter*, 14 (2003).

> maintain the qualities that he values most highly: 'clarity of expression, generosity in the exchange of ideas and information, the notion that theories need to be tested, scrutinized and criticized, a distrust of abstract systems and a deep-rooted scepticism about received opinions.

J.B. Trapp added to this portrait, indirectly conjuring the 'Republic of Scholars' by invoking Gombrich's 'distinctive universality' as an intellectual, and his conduct in the role of director as reflecting 'collegialità, [...] friendship and [...] largely unspoken indication of what was expected' of professional collaborators. The scene of 'Ernst with his cello, accompanied by his sister Dea on the violin and Ilse at the piano' epitomised for Trapp 'an admired sensitivity combined with solidity, directness and unpretentiousness'.

Other speakers were the neuropsychologist Richard Gregory – for whom Gombrich 'thought like a scientist' with 'wide-ranging curiosity and respect for evidence' – and art historian Willibald Sauerländer, who found it

> important to recognize [...] that Gombrich's unease with 'pseudo-spiritual vacuity' was part of his deep commitment to the ideals which hold together and give meaning to human civilization. He understood that, in the absence of any standards of value, the humanities would be dehumanized and destroyed.

In each case, as with Mann's essay, the interests and values of the Institute itself are presented in the variants preserved via Gombrich – scientism, humanism, universalism, empiricism – rather than in the form associated with the mentally 'unstable' founder. This seems true even of a figure like Sauerländer, who elsewhere had made more incisive comment on the issue of Gombrich's relationship to Warburg.[65]

[65] See Willibald Sauerländer, 'Rescuing the Past', *New York Review of Books*, 3 March 1988, <www.nybooks.com/articles/4517> [accessed 4 April 2007].

While this might seem unsurprising at an event devoted specifically to Gombrich and his achievements, the sophisticated representation of Gombrich offered at the event by Michael Podro indicates that a more intellectually challenging eulogy was possible. Podro's account is most interesting, and is certainly the most provocative of those given at Logan Hall, in the light of the issues I have raised in this thesis.

The *Warburg Institute Newsletter* reports Podro as speaking of 'how remarkably well 'the mythical and the real presence' fitted together' in Gombrich's case, hinting at the sense of self-fashioning which my readings have uncovered in Gombrich's published and unpublished writings. Podro's representation of Gombrich, relative to those of other speakers at the event, is positively dissident: a figure less certain and less comfortably located within canons of mainstream art history than those presented by Trapp, Gregory or Sauerländer. Charles Hope's 'clarity of expression' is here more ambivalently glossed as 'the knack of hitting on workaday analogies for complicated processes', a 'liberating frankness' and a talent for 'cut[ting] through the elaborations of scholastic prose'. This Gombrich is capable of 'remarking on his own discomfort at the way a painter like Poussin rendered the human eye' and although 'human rationality and [...] civilisation' still play a vital role in the constellation of Gombrich's thought, they are checks and restraints for an equally necessary 'capacity of the mind which 'selected aspects of the world and embedded them in our own thoughts'.

Those representations of Gombrich which appeared contemporaneously in the British national press were by and large less sophisticated than Podro's, while the less rigorous approach to historical scholarship characteristic of journalism means that these representations in the mass media further fragment or blur the representation of the émigré art historian.

In sculptor Antony Gormley's interview on Gombrich, conducted by Stuart Jeffries for *The Guardian* arts supplement, Gombrich was again presented as an articulator of humanist and 'scientific' clarity.[66] Gormley describes how Gombrich looked at his own work, *Field,* 'trying to understand [it] in a scientific and unemotional way[.]'[67]

For Gormley,

> The great gift [Gombrich] gave to us was to make the living process of art understandable to us all [...] Compare him with more recent critical theorists of art such as Jacques Derrida, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Baudrillard. Gombrich is so refreshing in that he's a humanist.[68]

Clarity is opposed to the critical in this mapping, with Gombrich as the scholar who was 'not in any way high-horsey or pompous. [...] There are things he leaves out, and probably for the good reason that it would result in waffle'.[69] What these omissions might consist of goes itself unsaid in Gormley's interview, but his final reference to them, which concludes the piece, brings Gombrich bewilderingly into contact with the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein:

> The great thing about [Gombrich] is how he successfully applies Wittgenstein's principle: 'Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must be silent.' I thank him for that unreservedly.[70]

Whether Gombrich's silences map onto those urged upon the reader in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is to say the least debatable. One speculates that the

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[66] Stuart Jeffries, 'He made looking at art an adventure', *Guardian,* Arts section, 6 November 2001, pp.10-11.
[67] Gormley in Jeffries, p.11.
[68] Ibid., p.10.
[69] Ibid., p.11.
[70] Ibid., p.11.

association to Wittgenstein was made because of Gormley's reference to the émigré generation of scholars. This reference, lending weight as it does to émigrés' Jewish identity, is one rather at odds with Gombrich's own self-depiction as a cosmopolitan figure. The erratic quality of memory in Pierre Nora's schema – the affective power of the *lieu de mémoire* – seems at its most explicit in Gormley's account when he evokes the emigration of Central European scholars as a Jewish movement and brings together in the same sentence the aged, ailing Freud, Popper, who spent the war itself in New Zealand, and a number of publishing firms:

> Gormley stresses that Gombrich was one of many Jewish thinkers who came to Britain during the 1930s and 40s and revolutionised intellectual life in this country: "Our heritage was enriched so much before and during the war by people such as Gombrich. Along with Sigmund Freud, there was the philosopher Karl Popper, publishers such as Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Thames and Hudson and Phaidon. Our cultural life has benefited enormously. It's perhaps something we have to thank National Socialism for – the only thing.["]"[71]

On the matter of the esteem in which Gormley holds Gombrich, it might be understandable that Gombrich's emphasis on technical skills in art is more convenient, 'clear', and commonsensical for a practising artist like Gormley than, say, Bourdieu's *Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*...[72] However, it is the yoking of Gombrich's thought to his life and the 'émigré experience' which makes this interview a site of memory in Nora's sense. It is as if Gombrich and his 'good sense' can only be invoked when seen in the light of an uncomplicated, unambivalent, emotionally stirring experience of migration – the 'only thing' 'we' British have to be thankful to the Nazis for.

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[71] Jeffries, p.10.

[72] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. by R. Nice (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

Erratic and conflicting accounts also characterise the many obituaries which appeared for Gombrich, particularly with regard to the thorny issue of Jewish identity, ethnic and religious.

For Michael Podro, writing in the *Guardian* on 5 November 2001,

> Throughout his life, [Gombrich] was anti-sectarian and unreligious. But it was impossible, in the wake of Austria's enthusiastic adoption of Nazism, to dissociate himself from Judaism, and he insisted on describing himself as born not as an Austrian, but an Austrian Jew.[73]

Conversely, Charles Hope in the *Independent* states as follows:

> Though both his parents were of Jewish origin, neither of them felt that this had any relevance to their own lives, and the same was true of Gombrich himself. The question of whether or not someone was Jewish, as he himself observed, was one he preferred to leave to the Gestapo. In later life he was certainly no Zionist, and disliked all manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism.[74]

The *Times* avoids any mention of Jewishness but phrases the significance of Gombrich's background in a way that either homogenises Germany and Austria, or implies that the art historian was capable of bilocation: 'Gombrich was very much a product of his native Vienna, and would probably have remained in Austria and Germany but for the rise of Hitler.'[75]

The obituaries are in closer agreement on the esteem in which Gombrich was held, and on his individual brand of humanism. The latter can crudely be denoted as 'traditionalist' or even 'Popperian' – labels which are suggestive even as the current thesis has shown their limits.

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[73] Podro, 'Sir Ernst Gombrich', p.20.
[74] Hope, p.6.
[75] Anon., 'Professor Sir Ernst Gombrich', *The Times*, 6 November 2001, p.17.

Gombrich's eminence is referred to in the obituaries of the *Guardian, Times, Independent* and *Telegraph*: Podro characterises him as 'the most eminent art historian of the last half-century, both for specialist scholars and for a wider public';[76] for Hope, 'he was the most famous art historian in the world'.[77]

The figure conjured is not only eminent but also an empiricist through and through, although this is rendered with varying degrees of scholarly subtlety by the obituarists. Both the *Times* and the *Telegraph* cite the opening sentence of *The Story of Art*: 'There really is no such thing as art. There are only artists.'[78] The *Telegraph* locates Gombrich within an intellectual 'approach to painting and sculpture [...] which seeks to interpret, for example a picture, in the contemporary cultural and historical context, so as to understand the meaning intended by the artist'. At the same time, his emphasis on the common qualities shared by human beings across periods is brought out time and time again: 'Gombrich persistently argued against "abstractions" and the collective niches of ages and periods. He believed in people, not periods; artists, not styles.' On the household of the Duke of Mantua, whose correspondence he studied for his doctoral thesis, Gombrich is cited as saying, 'For me that was very important, the conviction that they were all real people and not abstractions.'[79]

Charles Hope articulates a similar view of Gombrich's position, furthermore implicitly homogenising conisseurship and generalising academic theories: 'He was always suspicious of historical generalisations and always sceptical about the claims of

[76] Podro, 'Sir Ernst Gombrich', p.20.
[77] Hope, p.6.
[78] Anon., 'Professor Sir Ernst Gombrich', p.17. Anon., 'Sir Ernst Gombrich OM', *Daily Telegraph*, 6 November 2001, p.25.
[79] Anon., 'Sir Ernst Gombrich OM', p.25.

connoisseurs, which too often seemed to him to be based on little more than intuition and deliberate mystification.'

In his 'scepticism towards general theories', Hope writes, Gombrich

> always claimed a particular debt, in his handling of historical evidence, to his great friend Karl Popper [...] Rather than appealing to immutable historical laws, he preferred to explain artistic innovation much more in terms of changes in fashion among patrons and competition among the artists themselves.[80]

For the *Times,*

> Gombrich was wary of pronouncements about "the Renaissance" or "Romanticism", and agreed with his friend Karl Popper that history was not an inevitable pattern, that things could have gone another way. [...] His enterprise, as he saw it, was not to make qualitative judgments – he believed those emerged as the historical consensus of the well-informed – but to discover new facts and to squeeze from them new knowledge.[81]

Later in life, it is written, Gombrich 'tended to see himself as a lone surviving defender of values shared and inculcated by those he commemorates in the book [*Tributes*]'.[82] This self-depiction is also channelled in the *Times*' depiction of Gombrich as

> a warm-hearted sceptic of the "20th-century art madness." He posited the idea that the rapid shift in artistic fashion had commercial origins in those artists who sought to draw attention to themselves, and dismissed much of contemporary abstract art as a "fad". He speculated that the public, once antagonistic towards change in art, had been transformed into an audience which passively accepted change and novelty. "If anybody needs a champion today," he said, "it is the artist who shuns rebellious gestures. It is the interest in change that has accelerated change to its giddy pace."[83]

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[80] Hope, p.6.
[81] Anon., 'Professor Sir Ernst Gombrich', p.17.
[82] Ibid., p.17.
[83] Ibid., p.17.

Much as at the Warburg Institute's commemorative ceremony, it is left to Michael Podro to provide a more sensitive account of Gombrich's scholarship. On the same issues as the *Times* and *Telegraph* pieces, his obituary for the émigré art historian reads:

> Gombrich engaged for 50 years in a polemic against invoking the collective mind – whether of an age or a nation or a class – as explanatory of changes in art or politics. He did so because he saw such explanations as not only circular but as failing to recognise the essentially rational nature of the way artists experimented and learned from each other. [...] Gombrich [was led] to argue that the major factors in changes in pictorial style were the result of rational activities rather than mysteriously changing expressions of the age. He was deeply opposed to any account of artistic creativeness which was couched in terms of a collective psyche rather than by reference to individual invention and discoveries which others could then adopt.[84]

Podro also cites another

> line of argument (manifesting his close intellectual relation to his friend from Vienna, the philosopher Karl Popper) [...] that the history of western painting shared with science the self-critical urgency to overcome its own previous formulas so as to become more coherent and compendious in representing natural appearances.[85]

Gombrich's criticism of contemporary art is also addressed, but in the respectful and loyal terms of one who regards himself as 'fortunate enough to have been [Gombrich's] student': 'He has been represented as the conservative opponent of modernism on the grounds of his interest in illusion and his ironic treatment [...] of The Vogue of Abstract Art.' It is not asserted that this representation is wholly fair, and it is also mentioned that an editor of the *Atlantic Quarterly* in fact gave the essay its more famous title of 'The Tyranny of Abstract Art'. Podro's language is also rather delicate and less than judgemental when he states that Picasso and many of his contemporaries 'were not central to [Gombrich's] sensibility' and that the art historian was 'critical of

[84] Podro, 'Sir Ernst Gombrich', p.20.
[85] Ibid., p.20.

various modernisms': 'He was unimpressed by art which seemed to depend on making a rhetorical gesture (as opposed to art in which there was visible internal structure)'.[86]

Gombrich's encounters with psychoanalysis make less of an impact on the obituarial record. Although the collaboration with Ernst Kris and the work on caricature are widely mentioned, the psychoanalytic nature of this project is less evident. When the *Telegraph* cites Gombrich's remark that 'historians [...] just cannot raise the dead and put them on our couch,' the allusive jibe at the expense of analysis – and the comment's origin in nothing less than an Ernest Jones lecture of 1953 –[87] is ignored and the comment is glossed as 'acknowledge[ment of] the academic's limitations' in providing an art history focussed on individuals rather than the *Zeitgeist*.[88]

It is not only that Freud and the discipline he founded go without mention in Gombrich's obituaries. Even Aby Warburg himself appears only thanks to the writing of Warburg Institute director Charles Hope. In his account, conflict between the approaches of Warburg and Gombrich is acknowledged, but drained of drama – and it is Gombrich's approach that is ultimately validated as outstanding. Hope writes:

> As a scholar Warburg was very different from Gombrich. He worked by juxtaposing very diverse types of material and looking for suggestive parallels, but he had great difficulty in formulating his conclusions in a clear or definitive way. Gombrich soon realised that Warburg's notes were not suitable for publication. Nonetheless, his study of this material later enabled him to write an intellectual biography [...] which remains by far the best introduction to this scholar's ideas.[89]

This last paragraph is as relevant to my discussion of Warburg as *lieu de mémoire* as one of Gombrich. The unnerving and destabilising qualities of Warburg's

[86] Ibid., p.20.
[87] See 2.2.4 above.
[88] Anon., 'Sir Ernst Gombrich OM', p.25.
[89] Hope, p.6.

scholarly persona and output are here reduced to 'suggestive parallels', neither 'clear' nor 'definitive', 'not suitable for publication' in their extant form and altogether 'very different from' the eulogised Gombrich.

The obituaries cited above comprise the majority of responses to Gombrich's death in the British mainstream press; however, the passing of such an internationally renowned figure also provoked responses from other countries' media.[90] Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, the work of Gombrich is proving itself not only to be eminently publishable, but also capable of perpetuating his particular brand of cosmopolitan humanist thought in a populist mode. *A Little History of the World* – an English translation of 1935's book of history for children – was released posthumously in a high-quality edition, receiving widespread press attention, at least in the United Kingdom.

Gombrich's *Little History* of 2005 is an unusual, hybrid text. It is of limited value as a document of the work done seventy years before, being assembled from rewrites and fresh drafts carried out in preparation for the English edition and only finally completed after Gombrich's death.[91] At the same time, many content corrections made by Gombrich himself do not replace the information they purport to update or reinterpret, but rather appear in the final chapter. The entire book resonates with the tone of a progressivist and humanist account of world history, focussed on 'the West' even as it acknowledges other cultures, so that its global vision remains marked with the traces of identity and outlook we have investigated in the current thesis.

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[90] See the archive at <http://gombrich.co.uk/obituaries.php> [accessed 3 April 2007] for a range of international and minor British obituarial notices.

[91] See E.H. Gombrich, *A Little History of the World*, trans. by Caroline Mustill (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2005), pp. 273-284.

The opening pages once more conjure Gombrich's 'chain of memory', with the image of personal memory as a burning scrap of paper falling down a bottomless well of time, and 'memory-light' as something that can be found in 'letters written by people who are already dead. And in this way we light our way back. There are buildings that are just for storing old scraps of paper that people once wrote on – they are called archives'.[92]

Dependent on this chain of memory, Gombrich's historical narrative requires there to be a 'first time' for, for example, the making of fire to be discovered. The notion of multiple or collaborative 'discoveries' and forgettings of technology, or even the possible coexistence of mutually ignorant 'inventors', disappears in favour of a single history. This chain, although claimed as belonging to the world, is being traced from an unabashedly Western-centred humanist perspective rooted in classical antiquity. Criticism made by Jan Gorak of Gombrich's humanist canon of excellence in art resonates here. Gorak writes:

> Although Gombrich cites universal norms and responses in order to characterize his 'canon of excellence', he confines his actual illustrations to a restricted roster of European masterpieces, the artistic productions of a tiny minority of the world's inhabitants. In addition, his opponents will note, his case for the validation of the canon of excellence rests on shifting foundations. He sometimes describes this canon as a teaching tool, sometimes as the lodestone of values underpinning civilization itself, and sometimes in terms of psychological patterning and communication with an audience. In all these ways, his suggestion that the few works admitted to the canon of excellence evoke a universal audience response seems to combine catholicity with restriction in a highly suspicious manner.[93]

The *Little History* offers a similarly strange admixture of an allegedly universal human perspective with a distinctively Western authority. Pericles' Athens, in

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[92] Gombrich, *Little History*, p.2.
[93] Gorak, p. 106.

particular, is a place and a moment in the Western classical tradition on which Gombrich spares no rhetorical excess:

> And now I can hear you asking: 'But what exactly *did* they do that was so great?' And I can only say 'everything' [...] The Acropolis still contains the most beautiful buildings we know. Not the grandest, or the most splendid. Simply the most beautiful. Every detail is so clear and so simple that one cannot imagine it otherwise.[94]

Ancient Greece is the home of intellectual as well as material beauty for Gombrich, too. The timeless Republic of Letters itself is alluded to when the contents of the Library of Alexandria are described as 'the Greek soldiers who set off to conquer the world. And that empire is still standing today.'[95]

Monotheism also forms part of this history. When the Jewish people are introduced into the narrative as a small tribe, they are designated as special because 'they didn't just become *part* of history, they *made* history – and by that I mean they shaped the course of all history to come'.[96] This, however, is a reference to the worship of a single deity, which is also endorsed where it appears during the regime of the Egyptian Pharoah Akhenaton, glossed as a religion 'no longer severe, rigid and solemn, but freer and more natural'.[97] Gombrich is careful not to disparage non-Western belief traditions outright – Buddha, for one, is accorded as much space and praise as Christ – but members of Arab cultures in particular might feel somewhat disappointed by Gombrich's account. Introduced as a people with 'piercing dark eyes' who 'when the monks were teaching simple peasants and the Merovingian kings were ruling over the Franks [...] were busy galloping around in the desert, living in tents and fighting each

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[94] Gombrich, *Little History*, pp. 48-9.
[95] Ibid., p. 72.
[96] Ibid., p. 24.
[97] Ibid., p.15.

other',[98] the book's Arabs are noted for their scholarship (which Gombrich endorses, as he does the work of history's scholars wherever he finds them, from Confucius' China to Frederick of Hohenstaufen), but also for their aggressive attitude towards other peoples. Gombrich cites a translation of the Qur'an:

> 'Fight the infidel until all resistance is destroyed.' And in another passage: 'Slay the idolatrous wherever you shall find them, capture them, besiege them, seek them out in all places. But if they convert, then let them go in peace.'[99]

He describes the growth of the Arab empire, ominously, as 'flames, as it were, spreading out from Mecca in all directions. It was as if Muhammad had thrown a glowing spark onto the map'.[100] Gombrich strives, typically, not to cause offence outright, writing:

> Perhaps it's just as well that Charles Martel defeated the Arabs in 732. And yet it was not such a bad thing that they founded their great empire, because it was through those conquests that the ideas and discoveries of the Persians, the Greeks, the Indians and even the Chinese were all brought together.[101]

However, this gesture towards balance is somewhat qualified. Gombrich acknowledges Western brutality in the Crusades – 'They massacred all the Muslims and committed hideous atrocities' – but the perpetrators are considered to have 'behaved neither like knights or Christians'.[102] Yet when Gombrich disapproves of Charlemagne putting unbelievers to death as part of his evangelism, he writes that 'Charlemagne saw himself as the leader of all Christians and in this he was not unlike the Muslims who thought you could force people to believe.'[103] The text can be interpreted to mean that atrocity and religious tyranny are aberrations when carried out by 'the West' but

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[98] Ibid., pp. 115-6.
[99] Ibid., p. 119.
[100] Ibid., p. 120.
[101] Ibid., p. 122.
[102] Ibid., p. 142.
[103] Ibid., p. 126.

ideologically intrinsic to Islamic cultures. Eurocentrism manifests itself even when Gombrich is apparently making a heartfelt gesture towards a genuinely global history. Gombrich introduces the Americas to his narrative only at the time of their 'discovery' by Europe, writing 'What until now we have called the history of the world is in fact the history of no more than half the world'.[104] This seems a rather muddled form of inclusion in a history of the world, to put it kindly, and when Gombrich pronounces it too shameful to give all but the briefest account of European exterminations of native Americans, his silence is one which perhaps ought to have been overcome to truly show respect.[105]

Another half of the world – so to speak – that comprised by women, may also be dissatisfied with this *Little History*. Although Gombrich is on occasion careful to comment that, for example, 'a prehistoric man – or a woman – must have realised that meat from wild animals was easier to chew if it was first [...] roasted',[106] female historical actors are largely confined to the periphery of his narrative. Wives are present – with children in tow - to be defended by Athenian men at Marathon;[107] to be 'piled' into the ox-carts of their Swabian, Frankish and Alemannic menfolk;[108] and Gombrich tells his (presumably male) child reader,

> If it seems natural to you today to let a lady go through a door first, or to bend down and pick up something she has dropped, it's because inside you there is a remnant of the thinking of those knights of old who believed that it is a gentleman's duty to protect the weak and honour women.[109]

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[104] Ibid., p. 172.
[105] Ibid., p. 172.
[106] Ibid., pp. 6-7.
[107] Ibid., p. 39.
[108] Ibid., p. 106.
[109] Ibid., pp.140-141.

Many of the problems which contemporary readers might have with Gombrich's *Little History* must owe to its origin in the Vienna of more than seventy years ago – but the 2005 publication, hybrid that it is, cannot solely be judged on these grounds as it is being published in a different century and a very different context. The largely positive reviews given to it, at least in the British press, do not even acknowledge the issues. Rather, they tend to emphasise a legacy of Enlightenment humanist values along with Gombrich's Central European identity and Jewish descent, of which the author himself only makes brief mention in the final chapter.[110]

Robert Hanks in the *Daily Telegraph*, in a review titled 'A Viennese waltz down the ages', endorses the book's 'great stories and big figures' alongside 'a sense of the continuities of history - the ways in which human nature has not budged over the millennia, and the smallness of the differences between people'.[111] In the *Guardian,* with the book's Viennese origins and its banning by the Nazis again on display, the reviewer explains that 'Tolerance, reason and humanity were "the three fundamental principles of the Enlightenment" which suffuse every page of the *Little History*' and imagines it as the basis for a reformed school curriculum.[112] The *Sunday Telegraph*'s Tim Blanning considers the *Little History* a 'superhuman feat', given its encyclopaedic quality and rushed 1935 origins;[113] the *Times*' reviewer describes it as a 'benchmark of writing for children' and again emphasises not only 'rationality and egalitarian values' but also Gombrich's specific trajectory of migration from Vienna to the Warburg Institute in London.[114] Only Andrew Roberts' review for the *Financial Times*, with its massive emphasis on Gombrich's treatment of Marx, separates Gombrich's work from

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[110] Ibid., p. 276.
[111] Robert Hanks, 'A Viennese waltz down the ages', *Daily Telegraph*, 10 December 2005, p. 9.
[112] Amanda Vickery, 'A light in time's bottomless well', *Guardian*, 11 March 2006, p. 20.
[113] Tim Blanning, 'The past made simple', *Sunday Telegraph*, 9 October 2005, p. 11.
[114] Lisa Jardine, 'Another benchmark of writing for children, the 1935 Little History by E.H. Gombrich', *The Times*, 10 September 2005, p. 13.

his life story as it attempts to critically engage with the text – but this engagement is a crude and polemical attack, with Gombrich, of all authors, being accused of having 'prostituted his talents in the service of so foul a creed as Marxism-Leninism'![115]

The posthumous nature of the publication and the press reception of Gombrich's *Little History,* with its overwhelming emphasis on his émigré background and on the perpetuation of his humanist and cosmopolitan concerns, suggests that we might understand the text to be as much a *lieu de mémoire* conjuring the dead celebrity scholar as it is a history book intended for children. Seen in this way, the reviewers' investments in the figure of Gombrich set, perhaps, a depressing limit on the stories it is possible to tell publicly in today's Britain about ethnicity, history, scholarship and emigration in the mid-twentieth century.

Even more recently, Gombrich's *The Story of Art* was published once more in a special high-quality pocket edition.[116] The posthumous commemoration of Gombrich played an important role in the fresh presentation of this, the most famous of his works. Indeed, Gombrich's persona was used to authorise this text, parts of which are more than fifty years old, over and above any more recent art-historical scholarship. After a succession of prefaces to previous editions written by Gombrich himself, the new edition includes introductory material from publisher Richard Schlagman. This focusses attention on the author as 'a truly remarkable man in many ways, some well known, others less so.'[117] Schlagman recalls

> with great fondness the many sessions (some lasting the entire day) that I spent with Sir Ernst Gombrich in the preparation of [the sixteenth] edition, and [is] reminded not only of the enormous case that he exercised over each aspect of its

[115] Andrew Roberts, 'Flaws of Perception', *Financial Times*, 24 September 2005, p. 28.
[116] E.H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, pocket edn (London and New York: Phaidon, 2006).
[117] Richard Schlagman, 'Preface to the pocket edition' in Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, pocket edn, p. 18.

> design and layout but also of the genuine fun that transpired from practically every encounter with him. We have missed him greatly this time around.[118]

Alongside Schlagman's comments, the quotations discreetly included inside the front and back covers of the new edition are passionate about the author to the point of evangelism. A variety of celebrated publications and figures in the field of the arts declare Gombrich to be 'a great historian whose directness, suspicion of jargon and enthusiasm remain as infectious as ever',[119] who combined the virtues of 'breadth of knowledge and personal insight' and in a world of publishers competing to sell 'one big book on every impossibly massive but key subject [...had] art [...] all sewn up.'[120] Christopher Frayling, Bridget Riley, Antony Gormley, and Neil MacGregor all comment on highly influential teenage encounters with Gombrich's text; Henri Cartier-Bresson offers the formula 'Equation: Knowledge + Eye; Solution = Gombrich', while Jeremy Isaacs simply declares 'This book could change your life' and *The Birmingham Post* announces that 'Gombrich is as authoritative as the voice of God...'[121] The implication is that *The Story of Art*, authorised by the posthumous image of Gombrich and released in a convenient pocket reference format, far from being superseded by developments in the discipline, has been and will continue to be the 'Bible' for students of art history.

The 2006 publication of *The Story of Art* also occasioned further conjuration of Gombrich's image in the British popular press. In a similar vein to the comments of Riley, Gormley and MacGregor, Charles Saumarez Smith gave a review of the new edition to the *Guardian* which emphasised his personal relationship to the book.[122] For

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[118] Ibid., p. 17.
[119] Christopher Frayling, in Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, pocket edn, end pages.
[120] *The Times*, cited in Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, pocket edn, end pages.
[121] All cited in Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, pocket edn, end pages.
[122] Charles Saumarez Smith, 'Rereading: Old Master', *Guardian*, 2 December 2006, p. 22. All quotations from this source.

Saumarez Smith, the copy of *The Story of Art* given to him at age 15 'has travelled with [him] ever since', forming, together with Gombrich's other collected writings, 'the cornerstone of my art historical library'. Saumarez Smith makes clear his awareness of the book's potential shortcomings, acknowledging its 'consistently Eurocentric view of the development of art' and the expectation of its author that its readers would usually be 'precocious and intelligent, interested in the history of ideas as well as art, and certainly male.' However, it is again the posthumously evoked personal qualities of the author which are considered to lend the book its particular magic. Saumarez Smith mentions Gombrich's 'unexpectedly vital prose style', but even more importantly, deploys the chain of memory in noting 'the tone of voice of the author, which I remember very well from occasional brief encounters and from hearing Gombrich lecture [...] I had been familiar with him as an ancient, rather sage figure shuffling round the book stacks of the Warburg Institute.' Saumarez closes his short piece by evoking Gombrich performing and perpetuating his particular strand of European humanism in the most engaging way:

> He gave a speech after dinner in which he was contemptuous of his portrait [...] in the [....] National Portrait Gallery, and offered to stand in front of it once a week to demonstrate the fallacy of it as a model of representation. [...] What I remember with extreme vividness is the sense of him as a Grand Old Man who represented to an extraordinary degree the European tradition of study of the humanities, which he knew perfectly well had become deeply unfashionable under the onslaught of postmodernism, but which he refused to renounce. It was a heroic performance, impressive precisely for his absolute confidence in the validity of his views.

This confidence also manifests itself in an essay on Lord Leverhulme published in Gombrich's *Tributes.* There, the art historian recounts a visit to the United States, where he and his wife had gone with the intention of visiting a settlement of Native Americans seen by Warburg on his 1896 trip. Gombrich writes that 'we palefaces were not permitted to enter this ancient village', but he makes much of a

compensatory reward received in the person of a Mr. C.R. Webb.[123] This ranger of the Grand Canyon National Park was a former school teacher with interests in art and classical music. The Gombrichs were entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Webb 'in a caravan filled with art books and records of classical music'.[124] Mr. Webb revealed that his positively *Gebildete* aesthetic passions stemmed from an encounter with 'a refugee from Vienna who liked to play classical music'.[125] Gombrich goes on:

> It was this encounter which opened up the world of Beethoven to him, and the rest followed. The scattered seed of a submerged tradition had been blown across half the world by the storms of the age and had taken root in a receptive mind. It is this kind of miracle which vindicates the faith in civilization.[126]

The image of Gombrich, denied access to Warburg's ambivalent Native American 'Other', enjoying musical *Bildungskultur* within the walls of an air-conditioned caravan, seems a pointedly humorous one for those studying his treatment of the Hamburg art historian in the light of memory, emotion, identity and scholarship. Rather than confront the issues of ethnicity potentially behind the exile of that Viennese musicophile, or the apartness of the Native Americans, Gombrich seems buried once again in the 'civilisation' and redemptive power of European high culture. In this last segment of my conclusion I have attempted to show some of the ambivalences and difficulties that lie behind our relationship to this complex figure, just as my thesis has examined Gombrich's relationship to the posthumous Warburg. However, the message of Gombrich's obituaries, and the book reviews accorded the *Little History* in 2005-6, seems to be that his ghost will never be allowed out of that caravan.

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[123] Gombrich, *Tributes*, pp. 90-91.
[124] Ibid., p. 91.
[125] Ibid., p. 91.
[126] Ibid., p. 91.

APPENDIX 1 – Translations of German quotations from primary and secondary sources

p. 19, lines 11-15:

'After all the discussions about historicism, relativism, positivism, structuralism, poststructuralism [...] a historiography is returning to the centre of attention which takes as its starting point the moment of the individual life and its forms of objectivation – as life writes itself into the narration of life.'

p. 19, line 17 – p. 20, line 2:

'that, to a significant extent, the academic work can be read as a response to the respective life-situation and as the product of an ongoing search for emblematic models of thought for engagement with existential questions.'

p. 42, lines 12-13:

'future mother-in-law, even before she met her husband-to-be.'

p. 47, line 16:

'Someone has to drag the cart.'

p. 53, line 25:

'Art as set exercise'

p. 71, lines 12-14:

'We students of the humanities run the risk of falling, out of respect for the natural sciences, into the relativism of a purely descriptive neutrality, which renders our entire activity questionable.'

p. 91, lines 8-9:

'By the way, it is also half prose fiction. I do not want you to judge the certainty of our other findings according to this sample.'

p.98, line 23:

'Monument to the disgrace of our times.'

p. 107, lines 8-10:

'nine tenths of that which the world celebrates as Viennese culture of the nineteenth century was a culture nourished, commissioned, or indeed even produced by Viennese Jewry.'

p. 108, line 21:

'What does it mean, to refer to "Vienna 1900" as a Jewish city?'

p. 109, lines 2-4:

'that the basis of this cultural and intellectual creativity at the turn of the century were the Viennese of Jewish origin, say from Freud to Wittgenstein, who brought forth this culture so rich in ideas.'

p. 109, line 20 – p. 110, line 2:

'To put it briefly: it seems as though two thirds of the social reserve of Schorske's *fin de siècle* culture was of Jewish descent.'

p. 110, lines 13-17:

'The Jews in Germany and also those in Austria took part in the revered German enlightened liberal culture, but rather than lose their own identity, they conserved the latter in the former. They have become members of a German culture but also a German-Jewish "subculture".'

p. 111, lines 3-4:

'a question of quantity or of numbers: How many of the people who brought forth "Vienna 1900" were Jewish or of Jewish descent?'

p. 111, lines 5-7:

'a qualitative question, that is, were the cultural achievements of these people, this culture, Jewish in content? (Whatever that should mean).'

p. 111, lines 14-23:

'There is no elegant English translation of the word "Judentum". And I am of the opinion, that this is a good thing. The concept "Judentum" is more problematic than explanatory. It is too vague, too abstract and too ambiguous to carry a definitive meaning. Sometimes it suggests the Jewish religion, sometimes the Jewish people and not seldomly something metaphysically abstract to be found in the air, in the ether, or even in the blood. I don't mean such things, and the most important result of my school statistics is that one can deduce the overwhelming position of Jews in Viennese modernism without involving a "genetically" superior giftedness in the explanation.'

p. 122, lines 14-15:

'What does it mean, to refer to "Vienna 1900" as a Jewish city?'

p. 123, line 1:

'all too contemporary'

p. 123, lines 1-3:

'the present understanding Austrians have of themselves, including all the discussions about Austrian history in the year of the millennium.'

p. 123, lines 4-6:

'that the Austrians can *nevertheless* see this culture as Austrian, that is to say, they can see it as their "culture", but only if one also recognises and acknowledges the "other" side of the matter.'

p. 123, lines 8-18:

'If one does not recognise and acknowledge the Jewish side of "Vienna 1900", and if one does not take notice of the full extent of what took place between 1938 and 1945, then one will never come to terms with the past, and the appropriation of "Vienna 1900" as part of today's Austrian identity would always be looked upon suspiciously (from without and within), and rightly so. If one wants to accept this heritage with a clear conscience, one has to realise "Vienna 1900" was also Austrian *because*, not *although*, it was a "Jewish city". In this way, however, Austria would be much more

than only the population of today's republic, it would include the exiled and their heirs, not only in Austrian history but also in its self-image today.'

p. 123, line 19:

'to come to terms with the past'

p. 139, lines 4-5:

'a systematic exclusion of Jews from all academic and scientific positions.'

p. 139, lines 9-15:

'The peculiarity of these cases rests upon the fact that the victims still managed to develop their academic personalities to their full extent, but were abruptly stopped by the conditions of the time from setting out on their academic career. I am of the opinion that these cases are of an urgent character and display such an imposing analogy to the German situation that it would be sensible to extent the aid operations being carried out for German scholars to them as well.'

p. 139, line 22 – p. 140, line 2:

'The anti-Semitism which had reigned since the Eighties in Austria has over the last twelve years or so intensified extraordinarily.'

p. 142, lines 7-11:

'The American part of the family takes the position, rightly or wrongly, that it is loath to send money to London while it could spend the same money in America and at least earn admiration in return. Hence the tendency to either draw us to America, against which I set myself, or cancel our funds.'

p. 144, line 25:

'Émigré press'

p. 145, line 2:

'Émigré press'

p. 145, lines 22-28:

'That we have indeed succeeded in opening a sister institute in New York, which will carry the name A. Warburg Memorial Foundation. We want first of all to put together a library of 20 000 volumes, which will be more work than pleasure. Then, however,

we are envisaging an exchange of teachers and pupils between the two institutes, which, if it works, can lead to very good results. I can already tell you that your name has already been mentioned in this respect. (Your wife could use the time to give a concert tour).'

p. 145, line 31:

'our stay here for the next seven years is now finally secured'

p. 155, lines 15-20:

'The idea that not only "central Europe" but also Austria can be found in Hampstead, on the Upper West Side and in Haifa would be a most fruitful idea, it seems to me. It is likewise worth considering that this would not be without merit in a time when Austria becomes officially more and more attached to and integrated with the West. Without acknowledgement of the significance of "Vienna 1900" as a Jewish city, however, this will not be possible.'

p. 160, lines 9-10:

'The bust of Aby Warburg in the Hall of Art. A Hamburg 'memorial case'.'

p. 161, lines 4-5:

'after their deaths received a place of honour side by side at the Kunsthalle.'

p. 162, line 7:

'How much does Erich pay Hamburg's taxi-drivers for that?'

p. 163, line 12:

'"Disguises", "costumes", "encapsulations"'

p. 163, lines 21-22:

'"taking into account" the past directly in relation to the future too.'

p. 163, line 25:

'The proper hindsight helps with proper foresight.'

p. 164, lines 1-2:

'...we (will) not forget the deep moral debt of our people.'

p. 164, line 3:

'guilty'

p.164, line 9:

'the feeling of guilt'

p. 168, line 5-6:

'extension of the borders of art history with regard to its material and spatial aspects.'

p. 168, lines 7-11:

'Monuments like the Palazzo Schifanoia give us an idea of the strength of the opposing forces against which Botticelli, for example, devised the Olympian style of his mythological engravings. This will remain the paradigmatic meaning of Warburg's essay, even if later research will be allowed to correct details of its interpretation of the decan sequence.'

p. 174, lines 10-30:

'Kind of cult with small moths and butterflies that fly into his room at night. Calls them his little soul animals, can talk with them for hours. Great concern, that his "little moth" does not have anything to eat; wants to give it milk to drink, brings it a linden leaf from his walk. Is unhappy when it flies away. Is happy when finds some other small animal. Looks for "little moth" everywhere. Can [say?] the following:

"Little moth, I thank you, that the Professor can chat with you, can vent to you all my burden, think, little moth, that on 18 November 1918 I was so afraid for my family, that I took my revolver and wanted to kill them and myself. You know, because bolshevism was coming. Then Det (his daughter) said: But father, what are you doing? And then my Mieken (wife) wrestled with me and tried to take the gun from me. You know, little moth, then my little bat (Freder, his second daughter) telephoned "Malice" (Max and Alice, brother and sister-in-law). They came immediately by car and brought Dr. Franke and Senator Petersen with them. Little Peter hid in the wardrobe and my Mieken and Franke went out with me. Petersen said to me: Warburg, I have never asked anything of you, but now I beg you to drive with me to the clinic, because you are ill. You know, then I drove with my Mieken to Lienau, there we ate hare's liver, and then I said, my Mieken, don't eat hare's liver. She did not hear, and then the misfortune happened." Writes page after page of letters about the little moth to his wife.'

p. 177, line 13 – p. 178, line 3:

'For me and some of my peers [Warburg] always seemed to be the sorcerer who had ventured into the magic world and payed for it with his sickness and who now, however, having returned triumphantly, could report of the demonic powers and forces at leisure. [...] The only thing that has remained dubious for me up to this day, even after my having studied it, refers to his implicit role as preacher of a moral teaching and his defense of an irrational world order. The attempts towards this are surely not possible to ignore but it is apparently the varying extent of it which in different ways becomes apparent in his writings and life-reactions.'

p. 178, line 15:

'responsible to both the University of London and the Republic of Scholars'

p. 189, lines 5-7:

'one of the most pressing matters for a definitive Warburg biography to explore the years of his illness in full detail.'

p. 189, lines 11-12:

'foresaw the catastrophe for Germany and often said, he felt like Cassandra.'

p. 189, lines 13-14:

'self-chosen duty was probably more exhausting and demanding than that of many a front line soldier.'

p. 189, lines 15-18:

'Today we know that no human being gets a sickness by chance, but rather only has to endure those that belong to him individually, and that their particular course is the more telling, the higher the intellectual standing of the person.'

p. 190, lines 11-12:

'Every idea enters experience as a strange guest and as it begins to realise itself, scarcely differs from fantasy or fancy.'

p. 190, lines 16-19:

'The thought formulated by Goethe touches upon that borderland of cognition within which Warburg roamed all his scholarly life, a borderland that spans the fields of secured, well-ordered knowledge like a glittering belt – no matter in what area they may lie.'

p. 191, lines 2-6:

'appears in all sorts of guises in Warburg's life's work. It is the gaze of the ethnologist upon that which is their own; it is working on language until, as a means of analysis, it is once more transformed into the image; it is the ability to bring together disparate things and make them speak to one another; but it is also the power of rearrangement of that which classification has already brought into a seemingly fixed order.'

p. 191, lines 14-17:

'For the reception of Warburgian cultural studies over what is now more than half a century, one fact is of central significance across the widest range of fields: Aby Warburg and many of the scholars in his circle were Jews.'

p. 191, line 23 – p. 192, line 1:

'to a heretofore unnoticed degree, the evolution of [Warburg's] *oeuvre* has to be seen as being conditioned by his Jewish origins.'

p. 192, lines 9-12:

'Warburg's concept of a cultural studies is presented differently in its context, both in terms of biography and intellectual history, than in Gombrich's 'intellectual biography'. While Gombrich's approach is genetic, Liebesschütz seeks parallels.'

p. 192, lines 17-19:

'much more the site of a never-ending discomfort [...] an identity never achieved [...which provided] a formative power for Warburg's interests, questions and academic concepts.'

p. 193, lines 7-13:

'Gilbert's sociobiographical explanation can be extended in view of the part played by anti-Semitism: the tradition of antiquity in Europe as a latent or reactivated, but always potent force in the sense of pre-formed images corresponds to the tradition of Christian hate of the Jews - equally long-held and similarly always lying ready – the ur-measure of intra-civilisational barbarism, which can be activated at any historical moment and in addition can be easily transposed to other minorities.'

p. 193, lines 23-24:

'Warburg's sickness will not be metaphorised and mythologised anew here.'

p. 194, lines 8-11:

'At this time Max Warburg was actually under round-the-clock police protection. His role as finance consultant during the peace negotiations had probably exposed him even more than he had already been during the war.'

p. 195, lines 5-7:

'One had to have the devil to hand, he almost cried, in order to cite him at any time, in order to beat him with his own weapons.'

p. 195, lines 12-15:

'Indeed, a collection which documented the Gobineau of the *Essay on the origin of the inequality of the human races* can easily be related to Warburg's dictum, that one must have the devil to hand, in order to be able to strike him with his own weapons at any time.'

p. 199, lines 2-3:

'Athens always wishes to be won back from Alexandria anew.'

p. 205, lines 13-14:

'the fear of anti-Semitism.'

p. 206, lines 1-5:

'Here the art historian insists on the objectivity of the scientific progress against the legitimate interests of biographers, and it is the achievement of his 'intellectual' biography, that on this point it is guided by the painstaking division of facts and the conditional validity of those facts.'

p. 206, lines 9-13:

'Through the example of Aby Warburg, it seeks to show that asking after the motives of scientists and scholars for their research and the related social action does not have to be seen as falling exclusively into the competency of psychology and also that this questioning does not aim at the subjectively uncommunicable.'

p. 217, line 1:

'The motto of this scholarly life could justly have been: "I serve".'

p. 218, lines 24-28:

'You will know that the "Incorporation of the W.I. in London University" was brought about before the end of the year from the Times, or Manchester Guardian, or Time + Tide etc...or should you have heard it, in the end, on the European broadcast in English, Italian, French and Dutch?'

p. 219, lines 3-4:

'which is the nicest thing that our new situation has produced up to now'

p. 219, lines 4-6:

'has been asked to introduce an evening of discussion on historical methods with a presentation on Warburg and the institute – also a very pleasing symptom!'

p. 222, lines 18-19:

'for still sending me the lectures of the Warburg library even after the death of our dear professor'

p. 222, line 19 - p. 223, line 2:

'I often think of him, miss him, and would be very glad to welcome you here during one of your Swiss journeys and to talk with you about our friend.'

p. 222, lines 9-12:

'two essays that both somehow seem to fit into the framework of the Warburg Library, especially the one on dream and existence. I am very sad, that the professor cannot read them any more, as I miss him with every step I take.'

p. 224, lines 1-4:

'Just do me this one favour and let me know immediately if you are interested in any of our studies. I will see to it that you will be informed of all our new publications.'

p. 224, lines 7-12:

'I thank you very much for the courtesy of sending me your lecture, which I found exceedingly interesting and which led me straight back to the ways of thought of our dear friend Warburg. [...] After having read your lecture I again felt how necessary it would be for me to come to Hamburg to speak with you and to get to know the library; I am going to surprise you one of these days.'

p. 224, lines 19-27:

'Reading your letter, I am most eager to tell you what I have been planning for a long time, namely that I would very much like to come and visit you, not only to talk about the professor, but also to obtain your valuable medical and psychological observations for a possible biography. This wish is all the more lively in me since the professor himself recently advised me to go and see you in order to have a look at the surroundings in which he had lived so many years and to make the acquaintance of a friend whom he held in such infinitely high esteem.'

p. 225, lines 6-9:

'Naturally I am at your disposal at any time. When you reach the point in your biography at which you need my cooperation I will be pleased to give it. I would just require the agreement of the whole family to do so, which I think is scarcely to be doubted.'

p. 225, lines 11-13:

'As regards the future of the library, I cannot say anything definitive. Personally I have of course given up my professorship, although I was in the war.'

p. 226, lines 11-15:

'I am very sorry that you have such great concern about your son and I would be glad to be of help with my advice at any time, thinking back with such pleasure to our cooperation with our unforgettable friend A[by] W[arburg]. You have no idea how often I think of him and how present he is for all of us.'

p. 245, lines 6-7:

'I don't give a damn, I'm not writing the book for England.'

p. 252, lines 18-20:

'that you belong to those who love the Institute [...] I can scarcely thank you more than my right hand could thank my left, because you, I and the Institute are truly one.'

p. 252, lines 21-22:

'as in your position it would have been easy to fake that'

p. 254, lines 15-21:

'This task will now fall to me. Unlike Professor Saxl who, as you will remember, visited Warburg at Kreuzlingen several times, I have never been there although I was employed at the library before Warburg's return. I feel this ignorance of your healing institution as a large gap in my understanding of Warburg's life and would be very grateful, if you would allow me to come and see you.'

p. 255, lines 1-3:

'Of course your memories are much more important to me than the mere sight of the surroundings in which Warburg lived for such a long time.'

p. 255, lines 9-14:

'I am very grateful that you have given me such free access to the files, because the denser the impressions of Kreuzlingen become in my memory, the clearer I see how much richer my image of Warburg has become. Of course, this is due not only to the files, but also the acquaintance with the whole ambiance of Bellevue and above all the talks that you were kind enough to have with me.'

p. 256, lines 1-9:

'Your description of Warburg, and your understanding for the things concerning Warburg's illness which interest me beyond the clinical picture, have made the written observations of 1921-24 come alive. And from both I have obtained an impression of the sick Warburg which I can connect very well to the healthy Warburg, in view of the human as much as the academic aspects. The insight that there exists such a continuity will go without further comment for you as a 'doctor of souls', as Warburg himself would have said. For me this was not so self-evident, and would not have become so in such a vivid way without my visit to Kreuzlingen.'

p. 256, lines 13-19:

'I believe that with some quiet reflection, for which I have not yet found the time, and a re-reading of Warburg's writings and notes I will be able to put down on paper some of these connections. In any case, I want to try it. I have also not forgotten that I promised to write something for you about those traits that I found to be residues of his illness after Warburg's return to Hamburg.'

p. 257, line 5:

'delusional ideas'

p. 257, lines 15-21:

'One-and-a-half years ago I entered my so-called retirement from directorship of the institute and ever since have had more time to prepare the Warburg biography, which

I have been planning for a long time. At present, I am writing an essay on his scientific language that, as I hope, will cast some proper light on his position as a thinker. All this has naturally given me new ideas and I have the feeling that I would also see the period of his illness with a fresh gaze.'

p. 257, lines 26-28:

'I am writing to Erich Warburg today in order to ask him to give his consent to a possible use of your letters for Warburg's biography'

p. 257, lines 29-30:

'I believe I have found interrelations between Warburg's work and the form of his delusions that I had not noticed before.'

p. 263, line 5:

'academic language'

p. 271, lines 6-8:

'Warburg's dictum [...was] that one must have the devil to hand, in order to be able to strike him at any time with his own weapons.'

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